



DENISON

1.6

YOUNG MEN'S MERCANTILE
LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
OF CINCINNATI.

No. 60.680

Members defacing or injuring books are subject to
BY-LAWS SEC. 16.

BERTRAND SMITH'S
AGENCY OF BOOKS
140 PACIFIC AVENUE
LONG BEACH, CALIF.

FROM
The Robert Clarke Co.
PUBLISHERS & BOOKSELLER
Cincinnati



BOOKS BY MARY A. DENISON

		Price
Captain Molly A Love Story	Cloth	\$1.00
If She Will She Will	"	1.00
His Triumph	"	1.00
Like a Gentleman	"	1.00
Rothmell	"	1.00
Mr. Peter Crewitt	"	1.00
That Husband of Mine	Paper 50 cents	" 1.00
That Wife of Mine	Paper 50 cents	" 1.00
Tell Your Wife	Paper 50 cents	" 1.00

LEE and SHEPARD Publishers BOSTON

CAPTAIN MOLLY

A LOVE STORY

BY

MARY A. DENISON

AUTHOR OF "THAT HUSBAND OF MINE," "THAT WIFE OF MINE,"
"PETER CREWITT," ETC.

Like a silver thread in the common warp of life.

*What would I do to win your love, dear heart?
Give up all hope of fame, the world's cheap grace,
Fortune's emoluments, fair ambition's rule,
All greatness that would sever me from you,
And how long wait? If sure you'd love me still,
Till death—then till eternity is ours.*

60680

BOSTON

LEE AND SHEPARD PUBLISHERS

10 MILK STREET

1897

Copyright, 1897, by LEE AND SHEPARD

All rights reserved

CAPTAIN MOLLY

C. J. PETERS & SON, TYPOGRAPHERS, BOSTON.

BERWICK & SMITH, PRINTERS.

T1

I AM reminded here that no less a personage than Dr. Briggs, of higher criticism distinction, has pointed out that the Salvation Army has recognized the working equality of men and women in a quiet practical, way, even conferring its military distinctions with a supreme indifference to sex. I was very much interested in the farewell given to General Booth by these people at Carnegie Hall on Tuesday night. It was a most imposing spectacle of several thousand hard-faced enthusiasts of both sexes who have given their lives to the doing of all the good they can in an humble way. On the stage was a band of women almost lost in the great assemblage, save for their white scarfs. But when the slum workers were called upon, they all stood up, gaunt, scarred women some of them, but brave, restored, full of ardor and not ashamed of their burden. I spoke with one of these girls. She was not educated. Her fingers were red and hard, for she had got down on her knees and scrubbed out a miserable abode to sweeten it for a sick wretch—but her poor heart sang, and somehow I took my hat off to her.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. REINE	1
II. THE BABY	7
III. MOLLY	9
IV. AN ENTERTAINMENT	18
V. A SALVATION BAND	26
VI. A CONFIDENTIAL TALK	32
VII. NAN	40
VIII. ENSIGN HARRY	47
IX. RUSSELL STACEY	54
X. WHAT THE BANKER THOUGHT	65
XI. PREPARATIONS	76
XII. STACEY'S DECISION	85
XIII. HOW THE BANKER FELT	91
XIV. WHAT CRUMP THOUGHT	93
XV. HOW THE FIDDLE CROONED	100
XVI. THREE WORLDLY HATS	111
XVII. IN THE RECTOR'S PEW	114
XVIII. COUSIN LUCY'S REIGN	120
XIX. THE PROFESSOR'S VERDICT	126
XX. A STURDY UNBELIEVER.	139

CHAPTER	PAGE
XXI. THE FACE ON CANVAS	146
XXII. JOHN HARDY, PRINTER	162
XXIII. MOLLY AND MANDY	172
XXIV. AN INTERVIEW WITH THE BANKER	188
XXV. MY PRINTER	199
XXVI. AN UNWELCOME FOLLOWER	204
XXVII. A SWEET OLD SONG	208
XXVIII. THE LOST CHILD	216
XXIX. CAPTAIN MOLLY'S ANSWER	226
XXX. THE BAPTISM OF FIRE	237
XXXI. FINIS AND HAPPINESS	248

CAPTAIN MOLLY

CHAPTER I

REINE

My brain, methinks, is like an hour-glass, wherein imagination runs like sands.

BABY BASSETT was a marvel. Even in that child-ridden community, Flagler Tenement, to which some wag had given the sounding title of PARADISE FLATS, where the minor key in childish sobs, and the major key in childish laughter, prevailed from morning till night, that Bassett baby was a wonder and delight.

Baby Bassett first saw the light in a cellar, which, however, made no difference to him. It really was a respectable cellar, as cellars go. The floor was hard, and two windows let in daylight from the sidewalk. At night it was brilliantly illuminated with a tallow dip.

Inside it might have been gloomy; but Reine Bassett, the young and pretty mother of Baby Bassett, cared little for that.

In hot weather, before that adorable baby came, the Bassetts sat upon the steps, and greeted their neighbors, who might be expressed as legion.

After that important event happened, the neighbors saluted the baby's mother with something like reverence.

The baby was like a pure white lily, lying in his improvised bed made in a big clothes-basket. The father of this child, Sebastian Bassett, was in the first stages of alcoholic decrepitude, and yet he was scarcely thirty years old. The man had a history, but nobody knew what it was. He had no business to be either a husband or a father; yet there he was, an accepted fact, and with a superb presence that declared for good ancestry. His life was largely migratory. The only reason that he lived in the cellar of Paradise Flats was because he could get no lower. And yet the soul of an artist dwelt in that marred body. At one time he had painted marvellously well. His pictures had sold for good prices, but every cent that came to him was spent for drink. Now, with an unsteady hand, and a certain scorn in his brilliant eyes, he drew wonderful outlines, when he was sober, on the sidewalks, and rarely failed to earn a few pennies, which he spent in the ale-house.

His wife, poor little thing, was the bread-winner. She would willingly have worked her hands off to provide something for her vagabond to eat.

Sebastian often went on a tramp. Then the

poor woman ate her crusts with tears, picturing the good-for-naught in all sorts of danger ; and wild was her cry of delight when he came safely back.

Even now, when dissipation had made such inroads upon his face and figure, he was a handsome fellow. Six feet two, with broad shoulders and curly brown hair and beard, regular features, and a rare smile, he was good to look at.

When sober, he was wont to take despondent views of life ; to long, with all a coward's longing and none of a man's daring, to end his life and his trials together.

When drunk, he was the happiest mortal alive, singing, dancing, dashing off the wonderful pictures of his brain upon whatever material came to hand. The whitewashed room of his cellar home bore witness to his skill, even to his genius. Here was the vivid portrayal of a ship under full sail, there some tender symphony in white and black descriptive of the life of the Christ. A cherub face smiled down from one corner ; in another the pleading eyes of a spaniel so wondrously beautiful they would have challenged the admiration of artists high in position, could they have been privileged to see them. These were only occasional efforts. His hand fell listless, the eyes grew haggard—then came stupor, a heavy sleep, and he was ready for another debauch.

The life of this poor wretch was a cross be-

tween diabolism and delirium. In his wildest revels he imagined himself a man of wealth. All his surroundings were princely. His wife, simple soul, endeavored to follow his drunken fancies. To the fine people who came to his fancied receptions, she was uniformly deferential. She praised their splendor, their rich clothes, their beauty, and plied them with fabulous refreshment.

Indeed, to the inner eyes of this adoring woman, full of the glamour of love, her wretched husband always looked like a prince; and this life of the imagination, rather than of the senses, had become a second nature to her.

So long as he did not scold or beat her, she said to herself and the neighbors, she would encourage his illusions. Better by far for him to come home under the influence of false surroundings, than to stay all night in a bar-room or on the street. It certainly was a stroke of genius that could transform the cellar into rooms of goodly proportions, flaming with color, and hung with the masterpieces of great minds, the tallow dip into chandeliers, the two pine chairs into satin *tête-à-têtes* and lounges of brocade, and make her "my lady," even in a calico gown worn out at the elbows and frayed at the skirt.

After a hard day's work, it was rather refreshing than otherwise to sit down and, through her husband's eyes, witness the transformation of the

homely wheaten bread into goodly loaf cake. Sometimes she could almost have declared that the two shrivelled little chops and the meagre show of potatoes were really the finest of game, the most appetizing of pastry, or that the water rivalled the sweetest muscatelle, and the tea in the old broken black teapot was actually champagne. So much will habit do that she sometimes found herself speculating over the wash-tub as to the *rôle* her Sebastian would play if he came home the worse for liquor.

She had been an innocent little girl when he married her, minus education, but gentle, pretty, good to the heart's core, hating poverty, yet in the midst of poverty and its environments keeping herself pure. Her name was Reine D'Urban. Out of the shop-window, where she presided over sundry sales of tea and coffee and a few wilted vegetables, she had looked one day to see the wonderful pave-artist busy outlining a ship. Then her curiosity drew her to the door. The expression of wonder, surprise, and admiration in a face that it would have been no dishonor in an artistic sense to use as a model for the Holy Mother herself, caught his attention.

In that moment the man, then master of himself, fell in love with her. She, blushing, palpitating, and overcome, drew back; but she carried with her that one admiring glance from eyes that had in better days been pronounced irresistible.

Henceforth her days and nights were one dream of adoration. The woman she worked for—for she was an orphan—had from that first hour no control over the girl whatever. Wildly, madly in love, she yielded to her lover's sophistries, and only conscious of her passion, allowed herself to be wooed and won. After their marriage they lived in two small rooms, and for a season he was too much in love to give way to his craving for drink. He even painted several small pictures of merit which served as pot-boilers for a month. But alas, by degrees the monotony of their existence palled upon him, and he began gradually to seek more congenial society, and to neglect his wife. Poor Reine!

CHAPTER II

THE BABY

So noble a master fallen!

ONE day, in the third year of their marriage, Sebastian came home sober. A girl, whose splendid but sombre eyes looked out of a dark Italian face, sat by Reine's bed. Something like fear crossed her face at sight of him, and in another moment the girl had vanished through the door and up the back stairs.

Sebastian stood in a dazed way, looking at his wife. She, with an angelic smile, lifted the cover, and lo! a cherub.

"That!" he exclaimed with a gesture almost of fear; "is that ours — yours — mine?"

"Our boy, Sebastian;" and if the child slumbering there had been a prince of the blood royal, no queen could have displayed more pride than poor, overworked little Reine. Now that she was paler than usual, how plainly the dimples showed when she smiled! It really was marvellous that the young mother retained so much of her beauty. Sebastian was not insensible to the lovely picture of mother and babe.

"I will paint you both!" he cried, holding up his hands as he moved a few steps forward. "O Reine, my poor little girl! What a gift! I swear I will keep sober now. I swear I will be a good father to the boy. You shall not live much longer in this devilish hole. Alas! what a monster I am! What a monster!"

"Come nearer, Sebastian," said the woman with a smile; "kiss me. You are no monster. You are my handsome husband, and you love me and the baby. The dear little baby! Everybody says what a beauty it is, even now."

"Yes, a beauty! how could he help it, when his mother is so beautiful?" and the man bent over and kissed her with tears in his eyes. It was a strange sight. The comely frame, grotesquely arrayed, rents showing here and there, boots wrinkled and broken, the face as the figure, yet noble in its outlines; the shabby cellar-room, the beautiful mother and the lovely child, in such a setting!

"I'll make pictures, such pictures, of you. I feel the artist's instinct rising within me. Where are my pencils?"

He searched his pockets. The mother smiled serenely.

"Perhaps," she said to herself, "the baby will save him!" and prayed a little, and again had infinite faith in the man she loved.

CHAPTER III

MOLLY

What's female beauty but an air divine?

"HARK!" and she held up her thin white hand. "Music! Doesn't it seem like heaven to hear music? Open the door, dear. It is coming this way. I can hear it better then."

The girl-mother seemed like one entranced. Over her sweet face a glory spread that gave her an expression almost celestial.

On came the little company with bugles and drums, with captains and lieutenants, with flags and banners, past heavy drays and lumbering wagons, and horses too tired to be frightened at the din. Something stopped their progress; and the women broke out into a bright, cheerful song,—

"We are coming, we are coming,
Don't you hear the Captain call,
The great Captain of salvation,
And the Father of us all?"

Pausing before the cellar door, a young girl, with a radiant face, looked in. She was richly dressed. Her beautiful hazel eyes sparkled with pleasure.

Sebastian had thrown the door farther open, displaying a part of the bed, and the sweet face with its tender eyes and exquisite smile lighted with the new mother-love.

"Is she sick? What a pretty woman! May I come in?" was the girl's greeting; and the broken man, dumfounded, stood back a little as the girl brushed past him.

"Can I do anything for you?" was the first question, as this radiant vision reached the bedside, never caring for her dainty garments.

"Oh, thank you, no. Sebastian is going to work, now that the baby has come;" and as if she had known her visitor all her life, she turned down the bedclothes, and the baby woke at that moment, opening large blue eyes.

"Why, what a lovely baby! How old is it?" and the girl took the chair which Sebastian brought her, his eyes yet full of wonder.

"It is just three weeks old," was the reply.

"The little darling! But he is not half dressed."

"It was all I had. The neighbors up-stairs are at work on some little gowns for him. And when I am round again he shall have plenty of clothes. Sebastian is going to work. And the neighbors are all so good! You cannot think how good they are, for you know they are all poor like myself. But Sebastian is going to work. He is an artist."

The man of the house, or rather the cellar, had gone out.

"An artist!" the girl exclaimed, and looked about her. She had not noticed the etchings on the walls; she now observed them with an interested glance.

"They really are — they really are good!" she exclaimed, intense surprise in her voice. "I'm astonished!"

"Indeed, he can paint better than that," the little woman said. "You should see his best. Now baby has come, he is going to make a picture of us two — if he can only get the paints. They cost so much, you know."

"Why, with such a talent, does he live here?" the girl asked in new astonishment.

Reine's eyes fell. Her face was all shadow for a moment. She seemed casting about in her mind what to say, how not to condemn him.

"You see — I think he will try hard, now baby has come. He is never unkind to me, never! If only they wouldn't tempt him to drink!"

"Ah, I see! You poor little thing! So brave! Open your hand. There, that is all yours. Keep it, every cent of it. If you do spend it, spend it on yourself and the baby. I have been looking for you for some time. Ensign Harry told about you. She lives in this house. Perhaps you know her."

"I did see her once," said Reine, smiling. "Does she belong to the — Army?"

"Yes; she is a very lovely character. I am

going to get you an outfit for your baby. Listen, they are playing again. You like music, I see."

"Oh, so much, so much!" said Reine, grasping the money tightly; "no band ever came this way before."

"The Salvationists, they are called," said the girl. "They are doing a noble work," and her eyes sparkled. "I should like to be one with them, to march round with them, to go among the sick, the poor, and the suffering! I should be utterly, entirely happy then!"

"Why don't you?" asked Reine.

"My father is a rich man. All my family would disown me. You understand, don't you? I spend enough money for one ball-dress to support you for a year. But even in this poor place you seem happy."

"I have my husband and my child," said Reine in a low voice full of content.

"And I follow the Salvation Army sometimes, even against my will. They brought me here, and I am glad I came. Tell your husband to be a good man for the sake of his wife and child. Tell him to paint me a picture—anything. I will buy it. I will give him a good price, if he will keep sober, and do his best work. Here, open your other hand."

She pressed some bills between the fingers of the wondering, half-dazed woman.

"That is for him—for paints and oils and

canvas, don't you see? Don't give it to him, but send out and buy what he needs. I will give you a list. I know something of colors. Sometimes I do a little work of that kind myself."

She wrote a list on one of her dainty cards.

"Can you send for them?" she asked.

"Oh, yes; Nanny will go—Nan Gartia. She is a good girl. She lives alone with her father, almost at the top of the house. He is an old musician, dying of consumption. When he is gone Nan will be quite alone. They have seen better days. Poor Nan!"

"Somebody I can help, perhaps," said the beautiful girl.

"Indeed, they are very poor and very good," said Reine; then looking at her visitor with tender eyes softened by tears, she murmured, "It seems to me you are an angel!"

"Not quite," was the answer, with a quick little laugh; "but I am one of those unfortunates who long for a mission. I don't *quite* believe that my life ought to be wasted on vanities and worldly pomps, to say nothing of the flesh and the devil. People laugh at me and my longings—call them whims and fancies. But I must go. Tell your husband about my order for a picture after you have bought the paints, remember, not before."

The flash of rich garments, the aroma of a dainty perfume, the remembrance of wonderful words and gifts, and Reine was alone.

"I wonder if she will come again!" she murmured. Then she looked at the money closely locked in her hands, counted it. There were fifteen dollars in all; ten in her left hand—that was for her, and five in her right hand—that was for Sebastian.

"The blessed, blessed woman!" she cried, catching her breath with a quick sob. "Oh! Sebastian *must* do better now! How often have I prayed for it! How often, dear God!"

"What! has she gone?" Sebastian was in the room. "I can't think what made her come here." A momentary gleam lighted his face. He passed his hand through his shining hair that clustered in thick curls over a comely forehead.

The motion was an indication of newly stirred vanity. The moment of self-exaltation passed, however.

"What have we in the house to eat, my little one?" he asked, smiling down at the pretty face.

"The Smiths sent down some tripe, white as milk, and the poor Campdowns brought me in a chicken. Think of that, and they so poor! Open the little closet there, you will see that they have not forgotten us."

He opened it. A row of shining vegetables greeted his vision, above them a shelf full of meats, some of them cooked. Sebastian looked with greedy eyes.

"I'm very hungry," he said; "suppose I eat a little."

"Why, of course; they thought of you! Mrs. Ryder is coming down with my dinner. She is poor, you know, and lame too. Eat what you want, only I'm afraid you can't cook the potatoes — could you?"

"You've only to put them in water," he said.

"It ought to be hot. There's a little oil left. Fill up the stove, and heat the water. I'll tell you what to do; and then you can sit right here, where baby and I can see you, and eat. Afterwards — well, wait." She smiled to herself.

The miserably battered little oil-stove was soon lighted, and the potatoes under way. Presently Mrs. Ryder, the little lame tailoress, came down, limping at every step. She was almost as thin as a shadow, and her face was white with an unhealthy pallor. In her hand she carried a steaming bowl, and a good-sized silver spoon, a relic of better days.

"You look tired," said Reine. Sebastian went on with his cooking.

"So would you, if you had been kept awake till morning. The Flynns had a party last night; and what with the dancing and the tipsy freaks they cut, I'm nearly dead. Sometimes I think the cellar is the best place in a house like this — the cellar or the garret, where Nan and her father live. Now drink this, honey, it will do you good. I made it after the receipt of an old grand-aunt of mine. I never thought I'd come down to this

when she was alive. Let me see that blessed baby again. Well, if I ever did!" she cried in rapturous accents as the wee face was uncovered. "I never did see a young thing like that so pretty! Mr. Sebastian, you ought to behave, indeed you ought, now you've got such a beautiful child!" she added in a shriller voice; for poor Mrs. Ryder had no mercy on sinners, and tact was a quality that had never graced her cold, stern nature.

In vain poor Reine pulled at her gown till she almost broke the scant gathers.

"Go to Hades!" muttered the artist in a voice like an organ tone with the mellowness left out; but he never turned round. The woman likely did not hear; for she was busy now bolstering up Reine with the one pillow, behind which she put a bundle of old clothes. Then she limped out, telling Reine not to worry, she would be back by and by.

"Thundering busybodies!" muttered Sebastian when she had gone.

"They're very good to me," sighed Reine, to whom the white decoction was delicious.

"Sure enough, to you. *I'm* only a vagabond," he said dejectedly.

"Sebastian, remember the baby!" said Reine in awful tones. "You're no longer a vagabond, since little Sebastian has come," and her voice grew musical.

"God forgive me!" said Sebastian, as if smitten

with a painful blow. "It will take me some time to get used to Sebastian the Second," he added musingly; "so don't you mind anything I say. That rich girl—for I know she is rich—ought to have left you some money."

"She did," said Reine in a faint voice, after struggling for some time to keep her secret; "a—a dollar!"

"Bless her stingy soul!" was the response. "I was just thinking how handily a dollar would come in."

"You shall have it," Reine said cheerfully—"every cent of it. But I forgot to tell you the good news. She wants you to paint her a picture. She will buy it at a good price."

"Ah! that sounds more like it. I will paint you and the little fellow as soon as he gets God's light in his eyes. At present the face is a blank, pretty as it is. Ah! the dollar will bring me a few colors, not many, but enough to begin on." He was eating a chop now, warmed by the stove: the potatoes were mealy. He ate from a large plate on his knees, and seemed to know no want of a table, so blunted were his sensibilities by drink. And yet once he had been fastidious.

"There, I am through. Now, give me my dollar." He stooped and kissed her.

That night he came home, as the saying is, drunk as a lord.

CHAPTER IV

AN ENTERTAINMENT

The mind doth shape itself to its own wants.

REINE had gone off into a quiet sleep. One of the neighbors was sitting by her, and just on the point of leaving for the night, when the door opened, and Sebastian came stumbling down the few steps that intervened between the floor and the door.

"Countess de Lorn," he announced gravely—he never hiccupped; "bring a seat for the countess. My dear lady, I beg you will be seated. It happens that my wife, the princess, is ill. Madam, you are dismissed," he went on, turning to the astonished, self-constituted nurse. "You see, my lady, my wife has presented me with an heir. The young prince is sleeping. Allow me."

He turned down the coarse but clean coverlet, while the occupant of No. 27 up-stairs glided from the room.

Reine always wakened at the slightest noise, and now his movement set her eyes wide open. She met his flushed face, saw thereon the unmistakable seal of drunkenness.

"O Sebastian, how could you!" she said.

"My darling of darlings, I have brought Countess de Lorn to see you," he said with drunken gravity; "you must make her welcome."

"The Countess de Lorn is welcome," said submissive Reine, trying to keep a sob out of her voice.

"And she wishes to see the young prince."

"The young prince is asleep, my dear; but the countess can look at him," said Reine.

"Is he not a lovely child, Countess? And now, let me show you some new pictures;" and he politely ushered his unseen guest to the opposite side of the kitchen, where Sebastian seated his visionary company on a chair of his erratic imagination, a chair of state, and proceeded to point out the beauties of his latest production in oils.

"Those high tints, you observe, red almost as guinea gold, contrast well with the milky tones of the horizon. And the two persons seated under the magnolia are full of spiritual vivacity. Do you like the pose of the female figure? It accentuates the story — for you see the canvas *does* tell a story. Then in this wreck, I hope you appreciate the work of the poor artist. The storm is over, and the moon shines dimly through the clouds. Yonder poor fellow, on some floating wood, strains his eyes over the dusky distance. Will he be saved? I think that would be a good title for the picture. Thanks! I am delighted

that you like it ;” and so he went on about mist-wreathes and melodious wave-sounds, and much more of the jargon that painters affect.

Meantime poor Reine underwent torture. The coming of the baby with its wealth of love meant nothing then for Sebastian’s salvation. She had hoped so much from it, and now the last link was broken. She must rise to joyless labor, and stand over the wash-tub and the ironing-board early and late, — yes, earlier and later, — for there was one more mouth to feed. Carefully she felt for her money under the pillow, and hid it between the two pitifully hard straw beds, while her husband was searching for something to eat, of which, thanks to the neighbors, there was enough.

The banquet was nearly ready ; and in deference to the illness of the princess, the table was drawn up to the side of the bed. Languid and tearful, Reine lay there listening to the conversation which grew more and more maudlin, till the man, overcome with fatigue, threw himself along the bed, and was soon fast asleep.

Just then came the sound of music, the same she had heard in the afternoon, accompanied now by the singing of men, women, and children. She was very thirsty ; but of course she could not help herself to water, and as there was a little weak tea in the cup left by her husband, she drank it off, but it only intensified her wakeful mood.

The baby stirred, and all Reine’s warm heart

responded. How strange that she had something living to talk to! That of itself was a pleasure which she had never anticipated. Up to her lips came tender words, and for a few fleeting moments no happier woman could be found than poor little Reine. Deep indeed was her faith, true and innocent her heart, that she could look at the sorrowful burden of leaden years before her and still smile, as she felt the stir of that small bundle on her arm. The garden of her heart was all abloom, notwithstanding the heavy breathing of the well-nigh lost man at her side.

Suddenly there came a strange, fumbling noise at the back door,—a sound as of some one sobbing or groaning in deep trouble. The door opened,—Sebastian had forgotten to fasten it,—and in rushed Nanny Gartia, the tears raining down her white cheeks.

“I came down here—I ran all alone in the dark,” sobbed the girl, standing beside the bed.

Reine wondered why her eyes had not lighted her, they were so large and bright, despite the terror in them.

“What’s the matter, child?” asked Reine, putting her babe down carefully beside her.

“O Mrs. Sebastian,”—they all called Reine Mrs. Sebastian,—“my—my father!” and the cry was almost a shriek.

“Is he worse, dear?”

“He is dead!” wailed the child, and began sob-

bing again. "Mrs. Clarke asked me to come in there, but I couldn't. There's been a quarrel there. I couldn't stay in our room either, and so I felt my way to you. Let me stay with you and the baby."

"To be sure, you poor child. I'm so sorry! You are all alone now. Poor Nan!"

"I—I thought he was better," the girl went on, kneeling down by the bed, and hiding her streaming eyes in the pillow. "The music came by—did you hear it?—the Salvation band. I went to the window to look out and listen. Father called me. He acted so strange! His eyes were staring; and he was sitting right up in bed as strong as could be, and I've had to lift him just like a child for days. 'Give me King Solomon,' says he—King Solomon is the fiddle. It was locked away in its case, and it took some time to get at it. I ran with it to the bed, and gave it to father. I'm sure he didn't know where he was; for he called out in a loud voice, 'Attention, Orchestra!' and began to beat time. Then he drew the bow, and, oh my soul! the fiddle gave such a wail that it frightened me, and the room seemed like a great yawning cave. Then he cried out again, 'Attention, Trombone!' and fell back on the bed, the fiddle and bow still in his hands. I knew he was dead, and all I could do was to scream. They were quarrelling in the next room; but it all stopped, and the Clarkes came

running in. I couldn't stay there — I couldn't. I wish I was dead too. I wish — I bitterly wish I could 'a' gone with father. There's nobody left to love me or to care for."

"We'll all be good to you, Nanny," Reine said, patting the dark head.

"Yes, I know; but you're all as poor as can be. What can poor folks do but suffer? Don't I know? He wanted a little wine, just a little swallow; and I hadn't no money to buy it with. We were paupers, you know; and paupers don't deserve to live, do they? Poor people ought to die, and to go to — anywhere, if they don't hunger and thirst there. Every bit of my money is gone, and for two days I haven't been able to go on the streets with King Solomon. Perhaps," and there came a heavy, rasping sob, "perhaps he died of starvation, because he couldn't get the right things to eat."

"Don't, dear, don't worry. Think now that he is out of his poverty, and up in heaven. He was a good old man, and worked while he could, and didn't give way to drink. Perhaps you'd ought to be thankful."

"I ain't thankful to anybody," said the girl, crying heavily; "I don't know as I wanted him to live and suffer, but now *I've* got to live and suffer all alone. Think of it!" and she raised her tear-drenched eyes, "only a young girl, and poor and all alone!"

"You have me, and some good friends in the house, Nan," Reine ventured helplessly, feeling that she ought to keep silence in this dark hour.

"You!" said the girl with vehemence, "you! Haven't you got your own troubles to bear? and — that — brute — ugh!"

"Now, Nan, don't you go to call my husband names!" said Reine, her soft musical voice growing harsh. "I'm — satisfied — with — baby," she faltered.

"Yes, *you're* satisfied — satisfied to work your hands off for him — well, I won't say another word. But oh, you sweet, kind soul! if only you was rich, and I could tend the baby! There isn't a cent in the house, not a red cent. I can make a quarter some days, but I can't go out now — not now. I'd have to starve first."

"See here, Nan, I've got some money. Sh" — as the drunken man stirred. "Here's a dollar bill, and here's another" — she drew them slowly from her little hoard, and placed them in the girl's hand; "and, Nan, every blessed soul in Paradise Flats 'll be good to you, till such time as you get out to business again. Don't let your fiddle go, whatever you do, be sure! Bring it down here to-morrow, and put it under the bed. They'll be wanting to take that for the rent or something. Stay — say I bought it. I have! there's the money! But I don't want it. I'll give it right back to you as soon as you ask for it. You've

your living to git by music ; and some day you may play with a big orchestra in front, such as your father used to lead. He's where he can help you now, mebby. Don't cry any more, dear."

"You're so good !" sobbed Nan, placing the money in the ragged waist of her calico dress. "I wish I could live with you and the baby forever. If it wasn't for *him*," and a look of supreme disgust crossed her face, "I would. I'd bring that baby up" — then a wave of troubled recollection surging deep from the heart, she began to cry again for her father.

"There's been a nice visitor here to-day," said Reine ; "she promised to come again to-morrow. She's rich and good. The goodness is written on her face — she'll help you."

CHAPTER V

A SALVATION BAND

I cannot fashion soul or speech.

TRAMP, tramp, tramp !

The music sounded now, undisturbed by loaded vans and carts and carriages. The Army had, what it seldom could command, the right of way, for it was ten o'clock at night.

The men were stalwart fellows, and marched like soldiers. The women kept up with them unfalteringly. Among the latter were some pretty, some pathetic, faces. There were man-captains and woman-captains. "Harry" Vale, as she was dubbed, an English girl, was both young and handsome. It was worth looking for to catch the flash of her blue eyes under her poke bonnet. Even when egg-shells and rotten potatoes were thrown right and left among the members, Ensign Harry never flinched ; and her bravery subdued the roughs, and often cleared the way for action.

They had held a successful meeting that night, and added several recruits, who, a little shame-faced, but upheld by a dogged resolution, marched at the end of the procession.

The streets were pretty well emptied, but a few men and women stopped as they went by to laugh at and criticise the Army and its banners. They themselves stood still for two or three moments by Ensign Harry's request, before one of the handsomest houses in the city, the residence of a rich banker. Did the bright-eyed little ensign expect the banker or his daughter to give them a welcome or a hearing?

The banker sat in his armchair of solid mahogany. He was a solid man. Opposite him sat a handsome young fellow, whose beauty was the theme of all the marriageable belles of the great city. The splendid library was a poem in books, works of art, and *bric-a-brac*. It was the dream of a rich man moulded into shape, and its decorations were as perfect as money could make them.

The music sounded even through the plate-glass and the heavy plush *portières*.

"Damn them!" and the banker spoke with unusual bitterness.

"Who?" asked the young man.

"Those Salvationists. They're leading away my Molly."

"I wish I might enjoy the same privilege," was the response.

"I wish you may. I like you, Stacey. Your father was an old chum of mine, and I never knew him to do a dishonorable act. He was the soul of honor. Upon my word, Stacey, I wish I knew

how to help you, but, O Lord ! that girl of mine ! I think her mother had a pious paroxysm before Molly came. She was afraid she was going to die — as she did, poor soul ! and took up with all the new religious fads and isms. And she made me promise — well — *made* — I'd have promised anything, you know, at such a time as that — that I'd never interfere in the least with the girl's religious notions, if she lived to grow up. Well, she did live, Heaven help her ! and such a time as I have had ! such a race as she has led me ! First it was Methodism, then Congregationalism, then she slid easily into the Episcopal Church, and now, the devil take the luck, she's crazy over the Salvation Army ! wants to wear a badge, and all that. Don't you see, my hands are tied ? Why, she knows more about the slums than any blank district visitor in our parish. I allow her a liberal sum, and I'll be dog-goned if she don't come for more before the month is half over ! ”

Young Stacey listened, a half-smile on his handsome, sensitive face. It was hardly a wonder that Molly Stanley pronounced him a boy, her upper lip curling, and her beautiful face full of a haughty disdain ; for he was unusually youthful looking for a man of twenty-six.

“ Your daughter is a very lovely young woman,” he said, “ whatever her notions of outside things may be ; and fads are inevitable and excusable in so beautiful a girl.”

"If she could only settle down in a home of her own!" said banker Stanley with something like a sigh, as he rose and took down from its case a priceless meerschaum, "there might be some hope for her. Damn those Salvationists! Why don't they leave? parading themselves like a pack of fools through the best streets of the city."

"Oh, they'll go out. Such things don't last long, you know," said Stacey, helping himself to a cigar from a charming filagree silver tray. "Some people take them up, but they're by no means the best, you know. The church don't countenance them much, anyway."

"No; but they can do a good deal of mischief while they stay, that's the trouble. I wonder if they are in any communication with my Molly?" and he walked uneasily towards the heavily curtained window, then back irresolutely, then sat down, muttering between his teeth, "Thank God, they're gone."

"Miss Stanley would hardly countenance that," said the young man.

"Oh, you don't know Molly. She's the very devil—that sounds harsh, but she is the very devil for obstinacy! Let me tell you, the man who marries her will have his hands full," he added, conscious of the roughness of speech for which he was noted.

"I wish I might have the chance to try the experiment," said Stacey, smiling complacently.

It was easy to see that the young fellow had great faith in himself. He was a man of leisure, with a large bank account ; of good family, priding himself somewhat on his descent, and knowing little or nothing of the world outside of the circle in which he had been born.

Reared in an atmosphere of luxury, a member of the Episcopal Church, having passed through all the gradations from chorister to lay-reader, for his ambition led him to consider it a possibility that he could preach as good a sermon as many a graybeard, there was not in all the world, perhaps, a richer, better-principled, or more self-satisfied young prig. But there was something more in him than the qualities that made him a man of the world and a moralist, only he had not found it out yet. Missing his profession, which he gave up at the last moment, saying that he had not the conscience to go into the pulpit as a fraud, for his heart was not in it, he changed from the church to medicine ; but lived the life of a man of leisure, attended his club with the same regularity that he went to service, and found life very agreeable, till he met Molly Stanley. Then it became more than rose-colored — it took on the hues of Paradise.

All his life long, at the regular service, he had sat in the same square pew on the side aisle, facing the body of the church. One Sunday a slender maiden, exquisitely gowned, and moving with

an air and manner that proclaimed her to the manor born, entered a pew within the ken of his vision, and at once entranced his senses. It was not long before he learned who she was. Everybody was talking of the recent addition. His cousin knew her intimately. "Didn't he think she was lovely, and all that?" the cousin coquetishly asked. Why, she was old Stanley's daughter — Stanley the banker, rich as Croesus — but a very unworldly girl in spite of her irreligious training; for everybody knew that banker Stanley was one of the millionaires of the city.

Not long afterwards Russell Stacey was introduced, and his handsome face and attractive manners did make some impression on the young girl. But she, carried away with the hope of the world's reformation, in which she was to take no insignificant part, cared for him only as a friend; and discouraged his suit.

Not so the banker. Finding that the young man was the son of an old friend, that his character was unblemished and his standing secure, he was almost eager in his desire to encourage him as Molly's suitor.

CHAPTER VI

A CONFIDENTIAL TALK

The meaning of song goes deep.

ENSIGN HARRY looked in vain for some sign of recognition from Molly Stanley, as the small body of Salvationists labored at the wavering strains of "The Sweet By and By." They were all tired and longing for their beds, but they were trained to obey orders.

"Perhaps we'd better go on," said Harry the ensign, lifting her poke bonnet to get a breath of fresh air, and disclosing a sweet face and tired blue eyes. Thereupon the captain gave orders, and the company went marching along, the cornets getting fainter and fainter.

Meantime Molly had gone to her room with a cousin who was visiting her, one of the prettiest and most fashionable girls in the city. The two had left young Stacey after their nine o'clock tea, to talk over matters pertaining to some fancy charitable fair in which they were interested.

"I don't know but I'd as lief have stayed downstairs longer," Lucy Garland said, throwing herself into a big be-ruffled, be-pillowed chair in white

and gold ; "Russel Stacey is singularly handsome. Oh, how handsome! What in the world makes you so indifferent to him? I'd fly with such a lover to the end of the world."

"I wish you would take him off my hands, then," Molly responded, taking possession of another big chair, in the downy depths of which her pretty figure was almost concealed.

"Oh! he wouldn't think of me when you were by. Why, the man idolizes you, Molly. The way he looks at you! Why, it makes me positively wild. No one ever worshipped me as he does you—and I'm not bad looking, either," she added complacently, turning her head towards a cheval mirror. "Why don't you like him, Molly?"

"Well, because I don't, I suppose," Molly answered indolently.

"I'm sure there isn't a pair of eyes like his, I mean exactly like, in the world."

"I really don't know what color they are," said Molly.

"One can hardly forgive him for not going on with his profession," Lucy rattled on. "Fancy him in a gown with fifty dollars worth of embroidery worked on it, and a stole, made by the young ladies of the church. Oh, dear! what a handsome clergyman he would have made; and I'll bet"—beauty in private is not always choice of its language—"then you would have married him. Now he's a horrid doctor!"

"No ; not if he had been a clergyman twice over," was the decided reply. "I don't intend to marry. You know that."

"Fiddlesticks ! I'm two years older than you are. When I was eighteen I determined never, *never*, NEVER to marry. I wouldn't turn my back on a good chance now, I promise you."

"You have plenty of lovers," said Molly laconically.

"No ; not *good* ones — good looks, good manners, and a good fortune ! I could have Maurice Meeks, I suppose, a widower, a fortune, and with three children for whom he wants a mother ; or young Briggs, with plenty of money and no brains ; or Colonel Dewey, with a chin that stands out like a fort, and only wants a flag with the motto : 'No surrender' upon it. Oh, yes, there are plenty of *that* kind, but not one like your adorer. His very name is musical."

Molly laughed, and then relapsed into thought.

"I say, Molly, why didn't you go into a sisterhood ? I never saw a girl with your advantages so utterly indifferent to all that the world can give. If my father was a banker, — which he never will be — only a cashier in Uncle Stanley's bank, — and I had the money that passes through your hands, I should be perfectly happy. I'd ask no more of this world — not even a husband ;" and Lucy Garland sank back with closed eyes and folded hands, her blond curls melting into the golden shade of

the cretonne that formed a sort of halo about her head.

"You're awfully pretty, Lu," said Molly, rousing herself a little; "a great deal nicer looking than I am. You ought to be in my position; and I—well, if I was poor, I should know just what to do."

"Join the Salvation Army, perhaps," Lu, said, laughing.

"Indeed I would," Molly said, with so much gravity and such decided emphasis that Lu's cheeks lost their rich color, and she started upright in her chair.

"You don't mean it, Cousin Molly! you can't mean it!" she cried explosively.

"I do mean it, Lu. No other life seems to me to be worth the living," was the response.

"Not to march round with that ragamuffin crowd—that set of—of jail-birds;" and the words were spoken with irritating emphasis.

"'Tisn't the marching, but the good they do. They go right where Christ sent his disciples, in the by-ways and the alleys. I might march, and I might not; but I covet the crown they are earning by their noble efforts. You don't know them as I do."

"Know them, no, I hope not. I most devoutly hope not," said Lu with a shudder. "Dirt is repulsive to me, common humanity turns me sick, for I hate the gutters. The Salvation Army! Ugh! Captain Molly Stanley, the daughter of the

eminent banker, cheek by jowl with the most disreputable body of slummers that the world has ever seen. Do you know what it means? Social ostracism! Even *I* wouldn't speak to you. But come," her mood changed, "get you into some respectable nunnery, but will me your jewels and your nice wardrobe first, if you must do something startling. Heavens and earth!" She covered her face with her hands, and fell back exhausted.

"I wish you had everything belonging to me, Lu, — position, lover, and all. You see, I feel that I am leading a false life, and consequently I am not happy. I cannot be! I cannot be!" she cried, wringing her hands, a sob in her voice. "Something is telling me all the time to be true to myself, to throw aside the pomps and vanities" —

"To put on a coal-scuttle poke, and take on the sweat and grime of the worst purlieus of the city," Lu broke in.

"To try to save souls!" said Molly with a grave face and solemn voice. "I am rich; I am a Churchwoman; I sit under an eloquent clergyman who talks most pathetically about the sorrows of the poor. We sing, comfortably seated and fashionably dressed, the 'Sweet By and By,' looking forward to another form of existence; but what of the present life? What of the crushed spirits that can't get out to any church? can't get clothes! can't get food! What of the horrible present, while men, women and children are starving,

and can find no way to the Sweet By and By? Last Sunday we took up a collection for the poor—just a few within our own ken. Mamie Rivers sang a solo, ‘Rescue the Perishing’—who is going to do it? Beyond giving a pittance, not a fashionable woman in that fashionable church! How sweetly sad everybody looked! Old Colonel Turner, with his pale, handsome, sanctified face, every hair of glistening silver, who owns tenement houses and gin palaces by the dozen, looked up to the ceiling in the most pathetic, saint-like way. I suppose he gave a dollar in exchange for the hundreds he steals from the horribly wretched slums in this metropolis. I wonder how many bless his gray hairs? I heard an old man with hair as white as his cursing him last week. There he stood, with his poor old wife, one of the sweetest, saddest faces! and oh, dear, the day was bitterly cold! There stood those two dear souls, who have seen better days, on the snowy sidewalk, their wretched belongings,—a broken stove, a few quilts and pillows, a chair or two,—all the poor pitiful little household goods dumped in the snow and water. I don’t wonder he cursed him. Before Heaven, I could have cursed him too!”

Molly was rash, she was an enthusiast, she was very young. Later, when years brought wisdom, and her judgment had grown clearer, she saw how God even in his church allows the tares to grow side by side with the wheat.

She had risen, her eyes blazing, her slight figure raised to its utmost indignant height. Just at that moment came the strains of "The Sweet By and By" on the silent night air. From the windows where costly velvet curtains were partly drawn aside stole upon the sight a new moon, a few vividly bright stars set in the deeps of the heavens.

Molly's hands fell. Tear-drops sparkled on her lashes. Lu, with both hands on the arms of the great chair, gazed at her cousin, awed into silence. On came the little band, nearer and nearer, then stopped. There were not many instruments, — a flute, a violin, a cornet, a horn or two, a drum, — but just now they were all in tune.

"They are stopping here," whispered Lu, looking out carefully.

"Yes; don't let yourself be seen," Molly said in an exhausted voice; "I don't want to make papa any angrier than he is. I suppose they are paying me a compliment. They know how I feel, at least Ensign Harry knows."

"Ensign Harry!" Lu repeated, curiously looking round with knitted brows. "A man?"

"A girl, older than I am, and much prettier; an English girl, who left all the comforts of home, and a lover she loved dearly, at the call of the Master. Oh, if you could hear *her*! The stories of wretchedness she tells would sink into your heart."

"I don't want to. I haven't a bit of talent that way. It would kill me, and I don't want to die. A woman! an ensign! What a terrible thing it is! She'd better have married her lover, and made one home and one heart happier. Instead of that — marching with men and boys — working in disgusting dens. No, Molly, I don't want any of it; neither do you. Be content with the state in which it has pleased Providence to place you."

"You think all this sin, suffering, and misery please God, then?"

"I don't know anything about it. I don't want to know anything about it. I suppose there's some reason for the slums, but it's all awfully disgusting to me. Take me to a picture-gallery, but spare me the tenement houses. They're vulgar. Everything outside of cleanliness and decency is vulgar. And the idea of you connecting yourself with such a miserable organization is worse than all. Molly, are you crazy?"

"Would you think me crazy if I turned over all my fine things to you, and took my place with those humble people?" Molly asked.

"I certainly should," her cousin said. "I almost fear you are."

The little band outside at last moved on, and softer and sadder grew the strains, while the two girls listened, the one all fervor, the other all fear.

CHAPTER VII

NAN

*Pray Heaven for a human heart,
And let your selfish sorrow go.*

“BUT you see, Reine, I was so overjoyed! It must have been that — for the thought that I had a son, a boy! quite overcame me, and I had to drink his health. But that is the last time — I swear it is the last time! I have some splendid designs in my brain, mad though it was last night; and I promise you I will bring home money for you and the boy — for my wife and my son!”

Sebastian stood up proudly, his face all aglow with the satisfaction which his own words created.

Reine had no difficulty in believing him. How could a man with such a face and figure, albeit the lines of both were sadly distraught, falsify his word? And although he had done so a thousand times, she was willing to believe and receive him again and again.

There was a knock at the crazy door. Blue eyes, a bewitching little aigrette on the folds of an exquisite hat, a faultlessly gloved, gowned, and booted figure presented itself, as the painter

opened the door. Mutually they stood and stared ; Molly at the unwonted apparition of a man whose presence, though battered and ill-dressed, marked him for a gentleman ; Sebastian at the lovely vision standing in flesh and blood before him.

Reine, bolstered up by pillows, looked so ethereal, the faint scarlet of surprise flushing her cheeks, and the delight of seeing her visitor bringing a rush of tears to her soft bright eyes, that Miss Stanley could hardly keep back an ejaculation of admiration. Who were these dwellers in the lower world whose natural affinity for the pure and the beautiful had evidently been tampered with by shrewish fate?

“It’s by the help of the good people in Paradise Flats that we look so nice, baby and me,” said Reine honestly, as a heavy basket was deposited by a supercilious boy in livery at the side of the bed, during which operation Sebastian, too shamefaced to stay, had flitted. “I haven’t got many good things of my own, but they all take so much interest in the baby, you know,” with a seraphic smile. “See, he has a nice little cambric long gown, the only one I ever bought for him—and then was taken sick before I could finish it. Miss Martin did it—took it up-stairs and made the whole, little cap and all. They’re awful poor here, and you wouldn’t look at some, maybe—small blame too ; but you don’t know how kind they are. Somebody’s sending me down some-

thing every day. The closet is quite full of good things to eat. I know they drink, some of them, and quarrel and fight; but dear me, unless they're starving they always think of them that's worse off. And they all love the baby!"

"I don't wonder," was the rejoinder; "but they won't need to trouble themselves any longer in the matter of clothes. In that hamper there is everything your baby will need till it is quite grown. Some were given me, and some I bought."

The door at the back staircase opened.

Enveloped in an old red-and-black shawl which dragged behind her, and with a brown, battered, old-world-looking violin-case in her hand, Nan entered, her poor little face swelled and disfigured by tears. She was evidently quite surprised to see a visitor, and began to back out.

"Don't go, Nan. This lady will excuse you," said Reine. "She has just lost her father, miss; and she is bringing his old violin down here for safe keeping," she went on, as Nan stood irresolute, her great eyes glowing and palpitating — the eyes of Italia.

"Come here, child! and is — the violin for sale?" asked Molly, regarding the girl with new interest.

"No! oh, no, indeed! no! Even father wouldn't sell it to buy wine with when he needed it so much. He left it for me; it's mine!" she sobbed — "mine!" clutching it to her bosom.

"She plays a little herself, the child," said Reine — "on the street. Once her father led the orchestra, but he took sick. Her mother died five years ago, her father yesterday. Oh, no ; she only fears that somebody will take the violin, for rent or something ; and I told her to bring it here. *He* lays dead up-stairs. A good old man he was, with white hair — so good !"

"And is money due on the rent, my poor child?" asked Molly, all palpitating with tender sorrow.

"Yes, miss ; and it will take me a great while to pay it. As soon as—as—he is buried," she added chokingly, "I will go out on the street to play. Sometimes I make as high as a quarter a day ; but when he was so ill, he needed me,—I could not go. Mrs. Sebastian gave me a dollar yesterday, and that will help. Then by and by I will pay her back."

"And how much more rent is due?" Molly asked.

"Three dollars. The landlord couldn't put him out, you know, sick as he was, though he is a hard man ; and of course," she added, as an after-thought, "the rent was due, and the money is his ; but if he will only give me time, and not take the bed, I will certainly pay him !"

"You certainly shall ; and here is the amount and a little over," said Molly, pressing a five-dollar bill into the child's hand.

"O miss ! I'll pay you back, every cent !" the ready tears starting again. "How good you are ! and you don't know me, either."

"You shall pay me by playing sometime," was the answer, as the girl thrust the violin out of sight under the bed.

"Is that the best shawl you have ?" Molly asked.

"That's the best ; and I'm going to let her have my hat for the funeral," Reine made haste to say. "And only think, poor as they are here, the people made a collection, and got enough for a coffin. Of course he must be buried at the city's expense, in the Potter's Field."

"That's what hurts," the child began sobbing afresh. "If he could only be buried by mamma. She's got a good grave-lot, because papa was doing well, and now they must be separated."

How she reached the room at the top of the house, holding by broken rails, stumbling over children, and half-choked by the peculiar aroma of soap-suds, Molly never knew ; but when Nan applied the key, and the door opened upon a room with one chair, something that did duty for a table, and a bedstead, her heart sank at the sight.

The finely lined features of the dead pauper presented an almost Byronic delicacy of contour. The white hair curled back from a noble brow, the thin, aristocratic, and well-marked nose, the

pathetic curve of the lips, made up in refinement for the lack of better surroundings and the poverty of his general garb. It was as if in death the lofty spirit lifted itself tentatively in this miserable place, and asserted its kinship with the best.

Poor little Nan knelt down by the bed, and buried her face in the thin woollen quilt. Then she looked up again.

"They're going to put clean white sheets on," she said. "Everybody liked father."

"And do you remember when he led the orchestra?" asked Molly.

"Oh, yes; I was very little. He took me with him sometimes, and I ran round by the outside rails, I was so little. He had a silver stick in his hand, all silver; it was given him for a present, and we had to pawn it, only think! But what could he do when he got so sick? He never was quite well, but he would go in any storm to play in halls or at concerts. Afterwards he went on the streets, and he played the violin and I sang. Then we made money enough to be comfortable. But he grew worse, and I had to go out alone. O poor father, poor father! And only little Nan to care for you!"

Miss Stanley soothed the child's grief as best she could; and the little plan she had formed in her mind was carefully and thoroughly carried out.

People who saw the simple funeral on the next

day, followed by the Salvationists playing softly and sadly some of the old familiar hymns, stopped and wondered. There was one carriage, in which a few of the best neighbors and little Nan herself sat wondering. At the funerals that took place in Paradise Flats there were seldom any carriages.

CHAPTER VIII

ENSIGN HARRY

And all hearts bless her as she passes by.

It could not be said of the dwellers in Paradise Flats that they were lonely. I grant you that the newly rich, living in their palace homes, strangers to the *haut ton*, and moving drearily through their expensively decorated homes, may have everything that money can give, everything but the one they crave, — the social element. That was not wanting, such as it was, among our dwellers in the great tenement house. No. 4 drifted into No. 5, and imparted all the stores of her knowledge. No. 6 told alarming stories of No. 5 ; and the consequence was, that there was no end of rows, but also no end of sociability. A few who had lived their lives in better surroundings knew how to keep their places. Mrs. Ryder, the tailoress, never went to any of the receptions — she called them “sprees” — held by her neighbors, above or below. An invitation would have insulted her.

Nan and her father had lived at the top of the house — there were seven stories in Paradise Flats. The higher they went, some people said,

the more exclusive they were. Certainly the rents were cheaper.

When Nan came home from the funeral, Miss Stanley was waiting for her. The child wore a neat dark dress given her by her new friend. Her hat was trimmed with white ribbons.

"I don't like to see children in black," Miss Stanley said emphatically to her new acquaintance, Reine.

And now, what was to be done with the girl? The child herself pleaded to go back to the old place. She was quite competent, she said, to take care of herself. Had she not earned money for her father for two years? Miss Stanley objected to this, and made arrangements with a Mrs. McKiseth, a comely, red-cheeked little Irish woman who lived just under the roof, to give her a corner, and a sup and bite until she should be able to help herself. There she left her, clutching the old baize violin-case that contained King Solomon, and crying her eyes out. As Molly was going down the dark stairs, a door suddenly opened, and a waft of sunshine and perfumed air came out into the leaden atmosphere. A plain bonnet, a sweet, sad face, a cry of delight, and hands were clasped.

"Why, Ensign Harry!"

"Dear, dear Miss Stanley!"

"I didn't know you were at home," said Molly.

"I have just come in. Won't you look at my

room?" was the response. "I was not going out for anything special."

The key was applied, and the door opened.

"What a cosey little den!" cried Molly.

"Yes; it is rather so. I prize the sunlight beyond everything, and here I get it almost all day."

Even Miss Stanley's fastidious eyes could see no fault in the arrangement of the few pieces of furniture. A small rug laid on a painted floor, a couch, four chairs, three choice little pictures, some delicate pieces of china, a few home-made decorations.

"I like to make it as cosey as possible; for where I live, there is my work," said Ensign Harry, bringing out the best chair for her friend.

"And you live here alone?"

"That is the hardest part of it," said the little woman.

"Are you not afraid?"

"Not in the least. My dress protects me. I could go in and out at all hours of the night. Everybody respects the uniform," she added, smiling. "All the people in this place are friendly. Sometimes they can be influenced in a general way. It is a great work. To see the results in a well-ordered life,—cruel, beastly natures changed, drunkards reclaimed, families living in peace and anxious for culture, repays one for all the self-denial the work entails. My home people are

very angry with me, though ; that is the one sad thing about it."

"Did they need your help? Did you leave them in a way your conscience could not quite justify?" asked Molly.

"Oh, no ; my father is a large mill-owner ; my sisters are all at home except one, who is married. I was not specially needed there. They simply did not want me to ally myself with what they call the lower orders. You know how English people feel about such things ; they don't like the uniform, the strolling life. It was no easy thing for me to decide to break away from all the dearest ties of family and friends" — her voice broke a little. "There was one — well, I must not talk about him. He loved me, and I loved him ; but I gave him up" — a ring of suppressed triumph sounded through her voice. "I think I did it cheerfully, though for a time my heart rebelled. But could I live in idleness and luxury, and all those miserable breaking hearts calling for help?" A sweet, sad smile overspread her face. "It is a glorious privilege, — this of saving men and women, of saving them for this life, even if they will not think of the other. Good temperate fire-sides and honest affection, I think, sometimes help in fitting souls for the kingdom ; and if you get no farther than that, it is a grand work to do."

"Oh, nobly grand !" was Molly's response ; "a work above all work that I should like to do. I

have no mother, no brothers, no sisters. I was born rich ; I have never known anything outside of a luxurious life, but it is not a happy one."

Ensign Harry (her Christian name was Harriet) regarded her visitor with speculative eyes. She saw in her the ready wit, the easy, graceful manner, of the woman of the world. In her own little North-country home, there had never been any very exciting social duties. Now and then a visit to the city, here a concert, there a lecture ; but to Miss Stanley, the etiquette and elegance of society must be as native to her nature as the breath she drew.

It was that which made her launch out into most graphic descriptions of the life she led, — the miseries, degradation, filth, unsavoriness of living, which they encountered not daily, but hourly ; and she drew a quick breath when, after the pictured unwholesomeness of it all, her listener said, —

"That is living ! that is just what I should like to do !"

"But your father !" said Ensign Harry, clasping and unclasping her thin, shapely fingers, noting every detail in the soft percale dress of palest blue, the dainty gloves, the lace that in snowy flutings encircled her throat, the pretty straw hat with its small white wing, emphasizing above the blue trimmings the snowy tints of her skin ; "what would he say ?"

"I don't know ;" and Molly gazed abstractedly

at the slender foot just peeping from under the folds of her dress ; " I suppose he would be very angry. He might disown me. I'm sure all my fashionable friends would. But then, you know," her face brightened, " he that would do the King's commands may be called upon to leave father and mother. If I am called " — she hesitated.

" Yes, if you are called ! " said Ensign Harry ; " you must first be sure of that."

" You left father and mother, and even more," said Molly.

" I did ; and I have never been sorry," was the reply. The blue eyes were hidden now, the whole face was in shadow, the hands lay passive in her lap.

" Then, why not I ? " questioned Molly.

" Oh, the work is grand — yes — but — I sometimes ask how can even God be satisfied with such small results. The drunkards are past computing, the wickedness of the wicked is terrible. The whole sea of fallen humanity is seething, and we can only throw one small candlelight upon here and there a wave. It is very discouraging sometimes."

" But to save one ! " said Molly.

" Yes, to save one ! " Ensign Harry looked up, a flash of rapture in her eyes ; " it is like catching glimpses of heaven here and there."

Molly went home after a brief visit to Reine and Baby Bassett. On her way she passed Sebastian

outlining a wonderful group on the pavement with chalk. The man pulled his ragged felt hat over his eyes, and bent lower to his task. Miss Stanley was ashamed of him, for him, and passed rapidly by. This caricature of genius, grubbing for a penny while full purses and palace homes waited his pleasure if only his manhood could conquer, angered her.

“I will try! I will try!” she said to herself. “If only to save him! This life I shall like. have never more than tolerated the other.”

CHAPTER IX

RUSSELL STACEY

A home in which the heart can live.

MOLLY sped homeward. A lackey, obsequious and well-uniformed, let her into the trim splendor of the hall. It was four o'clock, and she knew her father was at home. A faint odor of cigar-smoke impregnated the air. As she went farther on, she heard voices, and knew that Russell Stacey was with her father.

She ran lightly up-stairs, only half pleased at the reflection that perhaps he would stay to dinner.

Stacey and the banker were talking about the merits of the last race; at least, Stacey, who had witnessed the performance, was relating the details of the sport in his own way.

"Of the eighteen nominations," said the fair-haired young fellow, leaning back, one leg thrown over the rich velvet arm of a big chair, "but two horses faced the starter, and Madge was the warmest kind of a favorite. Maid Marian at once took the lead with Madge, and kept it all the way round to the last furlong pole, when Janning, who had

Jenny Wales well in hand, and close by, began to force the pace. They came down by the stretch almost neck and neck; but by clever riding, Madge was shot ahead just at the judges' stand, and won by a neck. I tell you that's the horse for my money. I won a clear two thousand by her."

"Stacey, you ought to be a Bohemian," said the banker, after a pause.

"I am — a born one," was the laughing rejoinder, "as far as taste is concerned."

"Yet you're always lucky."

"Always, in most things," was the reply, — "things that are not vital to my happiness. However, perhaps I belong to the vagabond class, after all. I'm never so happy as when, in some of those down-town studios, I can watch and work with the devil-may-care fellows one meets there."

"What kind of work do they do?" asked the banker.

"Oh, simply pot-boilers, most of them. They're a fraternity, club together for their models, their meals, and enjoy rollicking good times. Most of them like their potations better than their painting. Those are the daubers that put lots of blue in the sky, and painful dabs of green in the foliage. Occasionally you'll meet a genius, a real genius, there. One fellow comes in sometimes in a slouch hat, and, well, you might as well say rags, who, it is said, is the son of an English nobleman. Remarkably fine-looking. Briton to

the back-bone, and the possessor of more than the average of manly beauty. Yet he makes a miserable living by chalking pictures on the pavement. Think of that for a full-grown man, and a scion of nobility — perhaps !”

“Of course he is worthless,” said the banker.

“Yes ; I’m afraid so. Even the Salvation Army hasn’t caught him yet. By-the-by, is Miss Stanley still anxious to throw in her lot with that peculiar people ?”

“I have heard nothing to the contrary,” said the banker. “It’s a fad, you know ; and she is not going to content herself till she joins them.”

“Great Scott ! you wouldn’t allow it,” the young fellow exclaimed, taking his cigar between finger and thumb.

“What’s the good of fighting ? I have come to a decision about it.”

“And pray, what is that ?”

“To let her go. That means punishment. If I refused — that would mean tyranny. It won’t last long.”

“But great Heaven ! a young and beautiful girl without protection ! subject to all sorts of insults.”

“Sit down, my boy,” said the banker ; for young Stacey, impelled by a violent emotion, had risen and was walking back and forth ; “let me give you a few of my reasons. In the first place, I promised my wife when she was dying not to

interfere with Molly's religious convictions. In the second, I am sure this romantic sentiment will wear itself out. In the third, if I don't give my consent, she will go without it, which will be equivalent to her running away, and will make no end of scandal. She anticipates a refusal; instead, I will made her way as smooth as possible; that will quash the romance,—the idea of self-immolation,—and all that nonsense. Besides, I'm not unwilling that she should punish herself by coming face to face with poverty—yes, and even crime. She is of a sensitive nature, with all her philanthropical notions; and the thing will naturally disgust her. Thus, in making the way easy for her, I am the more effectually barring it. There's no use in talking. Like a well-trained father, I must submit."

"But what in the devil am *I* to do?" and young Stacey turned his handsome, almost haggard face toward the banker.

"Young man," was the retort, "Molly is more than I can manage; you must look out for yourself."

"And I will, by heavens!" muttered the young fellow; "I'll speak to her to-night. I love that girl better than my own life. I vow to God I will conquer her!"

Miss Stanley looked provokingly pretty at dinner-time in her simple but artistic white dress. If possible, the white became her better than the

blue. Its filmy folds fell about her lithe, slender figure like a silvery mist; and the sweetness and delicacy of her manner sent a thrill through the veins of Russell Stacey, as he pictured her in a cotton gown and nondescript bonnet.

After dinner she played and sang with the finish of a well-trained amateur, and then young Stacey drew her away by himself into an arched recess lined with silver gray drapery.

"I am determined to protest," thought he, "and to propose."

"I might as well give him his quietus," said Molly to herself.

"Do you think your father is as well as usual?" he began.

"Papa!" It was with a real start and a shiver of terror that she turned upon him.

"Yes; isn't there a little — just a little languor?" he went on — "you see him more than I do. But then you know my profession enables me to be more observing than ordinary. I watch him critically. Is there any tendency to heart-trouble?"

"You alarm me, Mr. Stacey. My father looks no less vigorous to me now than he did ten years ago," said Molly.

"Then perhaps I am too professional in my observations. He certainly has the appearance of a man who suffers — not continually, you understand, but at times — from heart-trouble."

Miss Stanley felt her own heart quake a little. Was it possible that his quick eyes had noticed what might pass unnoticed by her? And if her father had heart-trouble, then it behooved her to watch him carefully, and allow nothing to happen which might tend to quicken his pulses or trouble his mind. Unfortunately for him, she caught a glimpse of his eye that put her on her guard.

"Mr. Stacey, you are a full-fledged doctor, aren't you?" she asked.

"Certainly I am," he replied.

"Then why don't you practise? You might begin on papa," she added slyly.

It was a pertinent question, yet altogether a piece of sly impertinence. He felt the blood surging over his forehead.

"Why — really — I haven't the least need, you know," he made answer.

"Oh, of course I am aware that you are rich enough to live without a profession," and her voice rang with sarcasm; "but why not practise among the poor, and give your services?"

"I might answer because I don't choose to," he said; "but really, you are so — so downright practical that you confuse me," he said.

"I only asked you a simple question," was the girl's rejoinder, the blue eyes looking innocently into his own. "Why just think! Who can measure the good you might do?"

"Why, so I might," he replied, amused at her

earnestness. "Well, I'll practise on one condition."

"And that?" she asked, smiling.

"That you will be willing to share the chances of a doctor's life with me. Good heavens, it is slavery, you know! No night, no day, no hour even, that he can call his own, — running the risk of contagion, small-pox, yellow-fever, cholera, blood-poison — charming list, isn't it? But all this I will do and dare for your sake, Miss Stanley; may I speak to your father? He does not, I hope, object to having me for a son-in-law. Come, now, acknowledge I have been frank."

"Yes, you have," she made answer; and though the two cheeks were flushed with brighter than their usual soft carmine, she did not flinch. "I will be equally frank," she continued. "I do not love you enough to marry you. I shall never love any man. My life will be devoted to other purposes."

"I do not love my profession sufficiently to practise it; but for your sake, I would willingly sacrifice my dearest inclinations," he said; and said it sincerely. Instinctively she looked up, and knew in that moment that she was nearer to loving him than she had ever been in her life. The glances he gave her revealed depths of feeling. His lovely Saxon beauty, the curls of his bronze-colored hair, the rare perfection of his features, the reality of his love, — all held her spellbound

for the moment. She must break this thrall, however. The current of her chosen life must not, should not, be turned. After all, naturally, the man before her was an indolent, smoking, wine-drinking, racing, self-worshipping man. So she had chosen to regard him, and so he was. To marry him was, in her unworldly estimation, almost to throw her soul away. For a moment his beauty captivated her; and she even said to herself, "If he were a professional man, and *poor*, and *had side whiskers*, what a splendid creature he would be!" I give her thought, which was girlish, if irrelevant.

"Mr. Stacey, I have a mission in life," she said simply, putting all the speculation aside.

"Yes, every woman has, or ought to have," he made ready answer; and something in his face angered her, she could not have told what. "I also have a mission; but I need some one to aid me in carrying it out."

"Your mission is very different from mine, Mr. Russell Stacey; and there is no doubt but that you can find some one ready and willing to help you. *My* place is among the poor and miserable. To comfort one forlorn heart I would almost give my life!" she went on, her fair face lighting up, her voice growing passionate.

"Behold the one forlorn heart!" he said, with such a mingling of pathos and tender satire that she laughed a young girl's hearty, natural laugh.

Then with a pleading and pathos that were almost irresistible, he hummed in an exquisite tenor, softly, sweetly, —

“ My Molly, O ! ”

and again the girl felt that she was dangerously near loving him.

“ This is strange love-making,” he said after a moment ; “ but lightly won, lightly held. I am going to persecute you into becoming my wife.”

“ Then our friendship must end here,” she said with dignity. “ Persecution I expect, and am prepared for, but not from you.”

He rose, and went towards a vase of flowers. Extracting therefrom a beautiful tea-rose, he said with more daring than prudence, —

“ I select this as a decoration for the poke bonnet, and a reminder of your clean, dainty life. Great God ! You leave a father who needs you, your friends who worship you, the tender associations of your childhood, the love that would shield you from even one of these thorns, for what ? For things for which I have no name ! You, the sweetest exponent of fair, chaste womanhood it has ever been my good fortune to know ! And what will be your reward ? The vilest ingratitude, the immeasurable disgust of your friends, a life without consolation of any kind. Remember, I have warned you.”

They stood apart, both angry, only his anger

was born of an all-conquering love, rejected and despised.

"Mr. Stacey," she said icily, "I don't wish to quarrel with you — good-night," and held out her hand.

"I won't take your hand," was his bitter rejoinder, "until you can give me your heart with it," — and he folded his hands behind him, — "but mark my words, you will yet freely give what you now refuse; for I swear by the heaven above me, you shall some day be my wife!"

She remembered afterwards how like a beautiful statue she had seen at Rome he stood there, how almost like a god. And yet she was glad she had rejected him.

"He certainly does love me!" she said that night to her mirror, and after that in fragmentary ejaculations, —

"I'm sure I'm not as beautiful as Cousin Lu. Why couldn't he fall in love, as they call it, with her? She adores beauty! And he is gloriously — or would have been with side-whiskers. A man should *never* be clean shaven. I don't care if he is an Adonis. Ensign Harry loved the man she rejected — *loved* him dearly! That *was* a sacrifice! I don't love Russell Stacey! Pretty near it, though. And, ah! I see his motive for giving me a fright. Papa — heart disease! Very adroit, Mr. Russell Stacey. You thought I could be frightened into submission, did you? So you are

going to persecute me into becoming your wife, are you? I'm *very* glad I didn't give him my hand — no, I mean that *he* didn't give me his hand! Keep it, sir. No doubt it's a very clean, white hand. I wonder if your heart is in harmony with it? Rich and lazy — lazy and rich!" She had combed her hair back, and stood looking like a snow-white statue in her dainty tiring-gown, so faultlessly fitting, so richly bedight, a marvel of loveliness to be tucked away in as snow-white a bed. Doubtless she was not quite as ready with her prayers, as she knelt down. In the flawless tissue of her imagination she now found rents and jagged holes. She wished she had never known Russell Stacey. Why had he come into her life with his beauty and his indolence?

"If it was *in* him — if he was the man he *ought* to be," she said, as she laid her pretty, girlish head on the pillow, "he would do his duty for God's sake, for humanity's sake, not for the sake of a mere woman."

"But he loves you!" said a still, small voice from the interior of the temple.

"I don't care," was the fierce rejoinder. "Let him go elsewhere with his love. I know what I shall do — to-morrow. It will be terrible! It will be awful! but I am not to be turned from my life's work. I shall speak to papa!"

CHAPTER X

WHAT THE BANKER THOUGHT

The stout heart wins the victory

"CAN I see you a few moments alone, papa?" his daughter asked timidly, when her father came home from the bank one day, some time after her rejection of Russell Stacey.

Her heart almost failed her; but she had prayed, oh, such piteous, fervent prayers, to bear all that might come, — scorn, contempt, even blasphemy; for her father was not choice in his selection of words when in anger.

"He will threaten me! he will disown me! perhaps he will — even shake me!" she said to herself before she spoke to him. "Even a gentleman sometimes forgets himself when he is very angry. Well, I must be strong, brave, daring, heroic! I love what I have chosen, and I would make no brave soldier if I could not bear persecution."

So she asked for an interview.

"Certainly; you may have the whole evening," he said. "I don't think any one will come in."

It was raining; and the fierce wind rattled the well-braced windows, and moaned and sobbed as it

went, a wailing, groaning, maddened spirit down the street.

Miss Stanley had made several visits to Paradise Flats. She had fallen in love anew with the beautiful little Sebastian, and had been shocked by the mingled evil and good in Sebastian the elder. She had added great bundles of petticoats, gowns, and aprons to Reine's wardrobe, so pathetically meagre, till the little woman, who had borne in her heart a long pent up but very innocent vanity, really began to take pride in her pretty face, and to hope, now that Sebastian saw her at an advantage, he might, for her sake and for the baby's sake, reform.

As for him, he went on in the old fashion, sometimes violently tender, at times obdurate as iron. He still in his drunken moods painted imaginary pictures, and held countless and imposing receptions at which his wife was forced to assist. These were grewsome occasions to her. Yet in the midst of all this lavishness of sentiment and supposition of generosity, he still made pictures on the pavements, full of a rude beauty and vitality, but in reality plagiarisms of the real thing, the underlying but abused talent, that might have made him fit to stand before kings.

Reine still washed and ironed and sang over the wash-tub; but Miss Stanley had found her better work, and she bent over the finest laces, the daintiest linen, for which she received boun-

teous payment. She was a loving little soul, and worshipped goodness and beauty in the person of her benefactress; while Sebastian the younger, in his pretty frilled dresses, slept in the monster clothes basket, a model of infantile beauty — beauty such as it would be no sin to worship. The large eyes of the child seemed to look out of a heaven within into a heaven beyond; for though born in a cellar, as One of old was born in a manger, his heritage might have been that of princes, his lineage also, if commensurate with his dower of personal loveliness. Angelic in beauty, he was also blessed with heavenly sweetness of disposition; and to see him smile, and slowly turn away the lustrous eyes towards something which no one saw but himself, was simply beatific, or, as Miss Stanley said, ravishing. That Bassett baby had stolen away her heart; and her dream of withdrawal from the hurly-burly of the world was very much quickened and brightened by the coveted association with the wonderful child, Sebastian Junior.

But to return to the banker's reply.

As he had anticipated, nobody had come in when Miss Stanley made her appearance. The storm still muttered and raved and shrieked; but the soft lights and shadows of the banker's study, the draperies so warm in tone, the red of the coal fire, the gleam of costly marble, intensified the comfort of its occupants, and made the tempest of winds and waters outside a rose-colored myth.

"Papa," said Miss Stanley softly ; and inwardly she trembled so that her voice was unsteady, and for a moment she could go no further.

"I am all attention," her father graciously said, carefully filling the bowl of his amber pipe, which in the softened radiance of the room looked like old ivory fancifully carved.

The banker was a tall man, and inclined to corpulency. Handsome too ; but he had long ago buried the joys of the past with his dead loves, and business was stamped upon his comfortable figure and regular features. Of the earth earthy, he lived but for the accumulation of money. All sorrow over lost opportunities, all pleasure over vanished joys, were gone. The far-off time when he loved the common pleasures of life seemed to him another age. He was essentially the successful man of to-day.

"Papa, perhaps you know why I came to-night — you" — and here she faltered again.

"State it in a business way, my dear ; I don't think it's money, because I paid you your allowance yesterday."

"Oh, no, papa ! you have always been most generous. But you know what my dearest wish has long been, and that I love" —

"Oh, that's all right !" was the quick, cheerful response. "I told Russell Stacey to go ahead. He's a fine fellow ! a very fine fellow — for one so wealthy as he is," he added, carefully lighting

the costly pipe. "It is in every way most gratifying to me, and I am indeed glad" —

"O papa!" came the response, in a voice so shrill that the banker actually started. "How could you think! how can you say such words to me? Why, I have refused Russell Stacey — refused him in such a way that he knows what I mean."

"What! refused him! refused Russell Stacey, a man I love as if he were my own son! Why under heaven did you refuse him? What does he lack? He's the handsomest man living, accomplished in every way, as wealthy as a prince, and as good as a priest. Why, he's the pick of creation — and you refused him!"

"I don't love him, papa," the girl said drearily. "I don't love any one but you." And then, rapidly, without any circumlocution, but in a way that befitted the daughter of a business man, she stated her views, her desires, and decision.

"Great God!" was all the banker said for some moments; and then there was silence, she waiting for the vials of wrath to be uncorked, and poured upon her defenceless head. But he had laid the plan of his campaign; and though the man's natural wrath was stirred even to vindictive speech, he controlled himself, and after a while spoke in his usual tones, —

"This is your coveted vocation, and your settled determination, is it?" he asked; and just then

a gust of wind struck the windows and shook the casement.

"Yes, papa," she answered.

"And what are you going to do about me?" he asked. "Of course I'm an old fellow, and not worth much in the way of society, but" —

She hung on his neck, and kissed his lips and his forehead.

"That is the worst of it — the very worst," she sobbed, the tears falling thick and fast; "but dear, dear papa, I truly can't be happy unless I follow the leadings of conscience. I must! I must!"

"Then, if you must, I suppose you must," he answered coolly; "I believe your religion sanctions the forsaking of father and mother, and all the dearest ties of life. Damn religion! say I," he went on, forgetting his *rôle* for a moment. "However, we will talk this matter over coolly, and forget family ties. Take that seat opposite, if you please. Now you are going among cut-throats, thieves, drunkards, and abandoned women, you cannot expect me to remember the relationship of father and daughter. If I understand you, you wish to throw in your lot with this ill-conditioned rabble called the 'Salvation Army.' Very well; you could not, of course, expect to go in and out of my house in that prison garb, so you must choose a home among them."

"That I see I must do," she said, almost in-

audibly. "I must live among those I wish to reclaim."

"Precisely. I hope you have thought of that ; but — you have had no experience. Luxury, elegance, every comfort for the body and every incentive towards the growth of the intellect, soul, have been yours all your life. You do not know the bitterness of guarding against poverty and temptation and sin. However, we will let that all go — you have chosen your lot ; you will find a home elsewhere."

"A little room, father," she said tremblingly, "like the one Ensign Harry has, in the same house with her."

"Ensign Harry !" he reiterated, a touch of scorn in his voice. "Who is Ensign Harry ? You said *her*."

"A true and good woman, father, who left a comfortable home in England and a faithful lover, and has never regretted it."

"Very possibly. I never heard that King Lear's daughters repented — well, go to Ensign Harry. Perhaps she can fill my place better."

"Father !" she entreated.

"You were talking of where you would live," he went on. "You have chosen a hard taskmaster, who will not be so liberal as your old father. Let me see, what is your monthly allowance now ?"

"One hundred and fifty dollars," she told him.

"I will increase it. You shall not go roaming the miserable streets down by the docks penniless. You shall have two hundred dollars a month for your expenses."

"Indeed, indeed, papa, I should be quite content with less. My personal expenses will be very small," she said, tears in her voice.

"You don't know anything about it—remember that, however far, however willingly, *you* leave your home, you will still be my daughter. Some men would cast you off, or—or put you in irons," he supplemented between his teeth. "I am going to let you see for yourself; but you sha'n't go empty-handed."

"O father! I expected nothing," she sobbed.

"Then you didn't know *me*, that's all," he said bluntly. "I suppose, as I have had to be father and mother both, the feminine element comes uppermost," he added. "I wish to Heaven your mother had lived!" he went on almost testily; "then there would have been none of this devilish nonsense."

"I think it would have been *her* wish, father; she was so good and generous and religious!"

The banker cleared his throat, for another anathema was very near his lips. "We are not talking of sentiment now," he said gravely; "there must be sense and reflection in what we say and do. You wish to leave me, Molly," he went on, lifting his finger, for Molly was about to speak

again; "in *any* case, you would probably have left me sooner or later. If you had married Russell Stacey, you would have gone away with him. I should at once have installed your Cousin Lucy in your place (as I shall do now), and given her a chance. She is pretty, vivacious, and ambitious; and I am very fond of her. I think she likes me. At all events, I shall secure some one to keep me company, to pour out the tea, and order the toast. As to your private belongings in the matter of dress and jewels, dispose of them as you will. I shall dress your cousin well, and make her very welcome. Of course you will be lost to society. People will talk — out of my hearing, for I should break their heads otherwise. So you see I am resigned. You can don your poke-bonnet and your linsey-woolsey at the earliest opportunity. I shall never witness the transformation. Whenever you see fit to renounce your mad scheme, the doors of my house will be open to you."

"But, father — may I not come to see you sometimes?" she pleaded tearfully, timidly.

"Not until you can come to me clothed and in your right mind," he said, putting aside his pipe, a hint that the conference was over; and Miss Stanley crept from the study, and sought her own room, disappointed, and sad and sore of heart, a very crestfallen heroine, although her wish was granted.

She had expected threats, vituperation, persecution, — any of which would have roused in her the spirit of a fighting ancestry and the longing for self-sacrifice. Now she did not feel in the least heroic; neither did she understand her father. She had not thought he would be so willing to part with her — coolly to pension her off, and advise her in a business-like way. And then the natural — “No,” she said chokingly, “unnatural” — way in which he talked of Lucy, so very much more beautiful than she, the worldly cousin who was to inherit all she was to lose — how could she bear it? The homely, everyday duties at the table, in the reception-room — and she whose right it was, ignored. Never had she looked for such an ending, so tame, so unutterably strange. Not that she wavered for a moment in the pursuance of her design; but it would have been grand to go to the Army as a soldier enlisted under the most trying and difficult circumstances. Instead of this, her father had coolly renounced her as if it was no matter of interest to him, she who had lived in his sight for eighteen long years, had been as the apple of his eye, worshipped, consulted, deferred to. Her life had been all pleasure; she was simply tired of adulation and the bonds of social life in a fashionable circle. That was not hard to leave, but she had not dreamed that her father would acquiesce in her plans.

Could she have seen him after she had left him,

inert, with a colorless face, upon which were drawn the lines of mental anguish, her heart would have gone out to him, even, perhaps, to the extent of saying, "My duty lies at home, though my inclination wanders." But now the final step was taken. She was too proud to acknowledge even to herself how hurt and disappointed she was.

CHAPTER XI

PREPARATIONS

*And the voice of a sweet-toned violin
Stole on the air.*

"THEN you carried out your plan?"

"To the bitter end."

"And she has gone?"

"No ; not yet."

The speakers were Russell Stacey and Banker Stanley ; the time a week after Miss Stanley had been closeted with her father in the study.

"How could you do it?"

Stacey had perhaps been studying the formation of his hat. He held it in his hand, and looked it over with languid interest. His beauty had in some way suffered a change. There was a restlessness in his manner, a heaviness about the eyes, that were not the result of late hours or venal orgies.

"Because I could not help myself. If we were good Catholics, and my daughter would go to a nunnery, what could I do but consent? Marriage would be better, but in either case I lose her. But I confess I never lost so much sleep in my

life as in the past few weeks. What will it be when she is gone?"

"Gone?" and young Stacey lifted his heavy, pathetic eyes. "You don't mean to say that she is going away!"

"Do you imagine for a moment that I am going to make my house headquarters for the Salvation Army?" asked the banker.

"I imagine anything, everything, but that she should go away. In Heaven's name, where will she go?"

"Oh, somewhere down in the slums; she seems to gravitate in that direction. She is making arrangements to obtain a room in Paradise Flats. Did you ever hear of such a place?"

"Never in all my life," was the reply. "For God's sake, will nothing deter her?"

"Neither your love, it seems, nor mine," was the quiet answer. "She comes of a race that never turned back when once the resolve was made. Bless your soul! my people were all born in Massachusetts, where the stones are not harder nor the rocks more adamantine than the will of those who plough the small triangles and cultivate the sterile earth till its very granite blooms to roses. Oh, no! let her 'gang her ain gait.' I believe she will come to her senses the sooner."

"What will the world say?"

"The world cannot say that I am a hard and cruel parent, as it would be sure to do if, in her

disappointment at my refusal to allow her to do what she considers her life-work, she should pine away and die. I shall treat the matter simply as a freak on her part and a liberal indulgence on my own."

"Are you not afraid to trust her among those loathsome dens? The very idea is monstrous!" said the young fellow, rising and pacing the floor, his whole soul in a tumult.

"Yes, the idea is monstrous; there's no question there. But she is infatuated with the work; and you might reason with her from now to Christmas — she would still stand to her decision. It has grown with her growth. Her mother was very religious, almost fanatical in her views, before Molly was born; and she seemed to have an insight into the soul of things in the future, — to dread conflict or persecution, — or she would hardly have extracted a promise from me that I would not interfere with Molly's convictions. Well," he added, after a long-drawn sigh, "we will see who is the wisest. I prophesy that inside of a year Molly will come quietly home, and give up the whole business. Meantime, nothing is going to harm her that I can see. The badge and dress will of themselves be a bar against evil designs, and I shall have some one on the watch to see that she is protected. Besides, Molly is well able to take care of herself. I have given up the idea that women are exotics, and must be tended and

dandled. Women do the work of men nowadays, and perhaps " —

He held up his hand. Away off, perhaps the distance of two or three blocks, came the faint notes of cornet, fife, and drum. Away off, winding among the many vehicles passing to and fro, they were on their way, that devoted little band of Christ's Army, marching to the lanes and byways, in obedience to their great Leader's command. Many a little child paused in his work or play at the gutter, many a blear-eyed drunkard stopped, moved to derisive and maudlin laughter, many a dainty young girl smiled at the quaint garments of girls 'as young as themselves; but on they went, the soldiers of the Lord, looking neither to the right nor to the left — and the banker and the young rich disciple of wealth and self listened in silence. Then they faced each other.

"I swear I'll do something to rescue her — at least to save her from the derision of the idle crowd!" exclaimed young Stacey, stopping his restless walk; and his voice was as though tears vibrated through it. The young fellow was in love, deeply in love, and for all time. Not with the violet eyes, the quick dimples, and the skin like mingled roses and snow, but with the real, vital self of the girl, the soul that he saw was so noble, generous, and world-denying.

"By Jove! there isn't another girl in the whole

city, no, nor in the whole world, like her!" he said to himself. "I dare not intrude even in thought at the altar where she kneels. She seems to me so far above ordinary mortals, and did from the first moment I looked into her lovely eyes, that the very thought of her lifts me above myself. But — strange, strange! such an infatuation! I cannot bear the thought that her name will be bandied from mouth to mouth by these fashionable — fools!" he bit his lips.

At that moment came a sweet, clear voice and the sound of a violin just under the window. The singular purity of the instrumental tones astonished him. The voice was simply a thin soprano, capable of better work if thoroughly trained; but the strings of the exquisite instrument vibrated as if the impassioned language of a human soul were striving for articulation.

Being himself a fair performer on the violin, the music naturally attracted him. He bade good-morning to the banker, who sat cross-legged, plunged in thought, and smoking like a furnace, and in another moment stood on the doorsteps facing the square opposite.

The blossoms visible from the grounds beyond were all in a quiver in the soft, warm wind. Touches of local color made the place resemble a well-kept garden; and Russell Stacey, to whom every sight of beauty was a revelation, turned his eyes admiringly to the girl's face.

"Spanish eyes!" he muttered, "or Italian. Great heavens! when have I heard a violin like that before?—and in the hands of a child. She don't play badly, either; there's the trick of genius in the way she handles that bow. Some poor little waif!"

His hand was in his pocket, and closed on a stray dollar. Never before had he spoken to the *canaille*, but now the influence of Molly's self-sacrificing spirit prompted him.

"How long have you played, my little girl?" he asked. He loved children.

"Almost ever since mother died," was the response; and the bow rested idly in her hand as she turned her glorious eyes to him.

He looked up and down the street. Nobody was coming.

"That's a very sweet-toned violin," he said.

"Yes, sir, it was my father's, and my grandfather's before him; it is very old," and she surveyed it with tender interest.

"Why don't you sell it, child? Maybe I could get you a good round sum for it;" and Russell Stacey held out hands of appropriation. He only wanted to look at it.

"Oh, no, no!" and the girl held the instrument closer, fairly hugging it. "I wouldn't sell it for a thousand dollars. It was all my poor father left me."

"Wouldn't sell it for a thousand, eh? Well,

you are a miser ! Starving, I'll be bound," he muttered, "and a fortune in your hands."

"Where do you live ?" was the next question.

"In Paradise Flats, sir, down in Mulberry Street."

A start betrayed his newly awakened interest. So here was one of the tenants of Paradise Flats ! He felt a new, intense interest in the strolling waif, and was on the point of questioning her further, when a well-known voice fell on his ear, —

"Why, little Nan ! how long have you been here ?"

It was like a "stand aside" to Stacey. It did not need a sight of the exquisite oval of her cheek, faintly suffused with pink, the soft light of her violet eyes, the pretty feather in the pretty hat, to tell him who stood there.

"Good-morning, Miss Stanley," he said icily, his voice choked and deadened.

"I — I wish you good-morning," she said ; and he walked away, his head high in the air, as a rejected lover should. But what an ache there was in his heart !

Nan fingered the dollar ; for he had slid the silver into her hand in passing.

"Look what the generous gentleman gave me," she said. Her lustrous, iridescent eyes, full of changing lights, smiled into Molly's.

"Yes, it was very kind of him," said Molly, a little absently, "very."

"He wanted me to sell this ;" and the girl lifted the instrument that shone in spots with the brightness of mother-of-pearl when the sun struck it. "I couldn't, you know," and her voice choked ; "Oh, no, no, I couldn't !"

"You needn't, Nanny. Did you bring anything for me ?" asked Miss Stanley.

"Oh, yes ; please excuse me, Miss, it's a note from Ensign Harry."

"All right. And now come in, and let's see if the cook has something for you. I saw her baking turnovers last night, and you needn't sing any more to-day unless you like. A dollar will keep you a long time."

"Yes, Miss," said Nan, all the child in her alive at the mention of the turnovers.

Nanny was settled in the kitchen with the cook, a bright, cheerful woman, weighing something near three hundred pounds ; and Miss Stanley ran up-stairs to read her note. Her father had gone to the bank, the maids were loitering a little over their work ; but Sally, Miss Stanley's own maid, was crying.

"Tears again !" said Miss Stanley. "I'm ashamed of you, Sally."

"I only wish you would take me with you, Miss," sobbed the girl.

"What shall I want with a maid ?" Miss Stanley was briskly moving from place to place. "No, no, Sally ; you'll be much better off to stay

where you are. You will like the cousin who is coming to take my place. She's a little quick-tempered, but very kind-hearted."

"But mayn't I come to see you sometimes?" pleaded Sally.

"That's for after consideration," said Miss Stanley; "perhaps you may." Then she read the quaintly folded little note that Nanny Gartia had given her.

DEAR MISS STANLEY [it said], everything is arranged. I found some difficulty in getting the room next to mine; but as you said no matter about the price, I engaged it. So, as soon as it is furnished, I shall expect you. The bonnet and gray dress finished. Will be here this afternoon. Yours for the Army,

ENSIGN HARRY.

CHAPTER XII

STACEY'S DECISION

All desperate hazards courage do create.

RUSSELL STACEY wended his way to the hotel, where one of the pleasantest and most spacious *suites* of rooms in the building had been his bachelor home for the last five years. He was a singularly solitary man socially, and had been since the death of his father, from whom he inherited his millions. In mental texture he was superior to most of his companions; his native ability had been aided and colored by a good university education. He had taken the degree of doctor of medicine, and had shown considerable interest in the profession. In fact, he was born for a doctor; though he would not practise, chiefly for the reason that he liked his own comfort too well. Perhaps the real Saxon word for "comfort" was "laziness." He coveted luxury and ease, cared for society only in a perfunctory way, but preferred his own delightful fireside, where almost all the year round a wood fire shook its red flags, and sent out its rays of color to glorify the room. And the room was a glory of itself, a spacious

art-treasury, upholstered in the most expensive fashion, with satin-lined draperies the color of gold. Most of his furniture had been purchased abroad, and nearly all his pictures. There were quaint spider-legged tables, and chairs so fragile in appearance that it seemed as if a child might crush them, yet which were built of copper, iron, and brass. Easy-chairs of almost every color and description stood in alcoves and various other places designed for them. Silver and gold candelabra of curious shapes adorned niches full of fragrance, for one of his weaknesses was the love of flowers; though, perhaps, I should not call it a weakness, but rather a pleasant dissipation which he cultivated for the love of it.

"She'll miss the flowers I used to send her, — but — great Jove!" and he stood like one dazed, in the middle of the floor.

I must not forget to mention Jacko. If ever there was a creature of the cat species that was born for luxury, Jacko was that cat. Of immense size and great beauty, no lounging-place was too sacred, no dish too luxurious, for his indulgence. At that moment the cat rose with great dignity, and turned his yellow-brown, velvety eyes toward him. He always expected and waited for a caress.

"Well, Jacko," his master said, patting the sleek sides, "we two old cronies must make much of each other. I've often talked to you about your new mistress, Jacko; and I beg your pardon

for having misled you. What would you do about it, Jacko? Suppose your lady-love rejected you?"

Jacko's prolonged purr sounded so much like "Don't give her up," that Stacey started.

Again he listened.

"Don't give her up," came in distinct, if nasal music, through Jacko's whiskers; and the cat winked, as much as to say, "I understand you perfectly, old fellow;" and then followed, in unmistakable cat-English, "Don't give her up!"

"Well, by Jove, that's curious!" said Stacey, "exactly my sentiments." He sat down, his eyes on the cat. "Why should I give her up? What would you do, Jack? Go to Europe?"

"Go to Europe," purred Jacko sonorously.

"Then come back and fight it out?"

"Fight it out!" came in sounding purrs; and if ever there was a cat-smile, it curled Jacko's lips at that moment, although the intelligent creature meant it for a yawn.

"Yes, and on her own ground! Heavens, why didn't I think of that before? That I should be taught wisdom by a cat! It's as clear as bees-wax, the longer I reflect. Jacko, you shall lap milk out of a golden saucer if I succeed. Milk? no, by Jove, cream, the best! The map gradually unrolls, the lines become clearer. I needn't give up the rooms. Bartlett wants them; and he shall have them at his own price, if he will take care of my cat. I owe my life to you, Jacko, perhaps my

reason. No wonder you wink, old fellow. You'd laugh if you could, a genuine haw ! haw ! as I do. Bartlett will smoke everything ivory-yellow or Spanish brown, but that doesn't trouble me ; I've thought out the whole plot."

He went to the mirror and surveyed himself.

"A wig, by Jove, and blue glasses, with a pair of side-whiskers, will do it. I'll put myself on the list with her penitents, only I'll outrank them all. Gad, what a bright idea ! Jacko, my beauty, when you die, you shall have a monument !

"Slouch hat, loose trousers, a working-man's outfit complete. Or a poor lost devil who doesn't know where to look for his next crust, a way-down tramp without buttons — no, I couldn't go that. A good sort of a fellow, with doubts as to the being of a God, — or — or — a pessimist — or leaning to dynamite. Not that either. A reduced gentleman, for I'll be hanged if I can cultivate the vernacular of the slums ; it will be as much as I can do to live in them.

"A room scantily furnished, a few books, a pretence of wretchedness, yet trying to be jolly like the late lamented Mark Tapley, with my fiddle and flute for company. Well, here's richness ! Do you approve, Jack ? "

Jacko perched himself complacently on his master's knee, and sent forth a volumn of rich expletives, patting his breast approvingly with two supple, well-padded paws.

"I must work up an interest in the Salvation Army. Bah! I hear their drums and bassons and catgut this moment — begging your pardon, Jacko, for the allusion. I know it must offend your gentlemanly soul to think of what base uses, etc.

"No doubt I shall get sick of the life, Jacko; I shall miss this nook of the Muses, fit reminder of the tropical lands I love. I must absolutely stir myself to work. But if I can stir a feeble interest in the heart of that little saint, my Molly, oh — By heaven, the thought is delirium! I shall be near her, Jacko."

He grew suddenly grave.

"I wonder how she will look in a poke bonnet?¹ a — poke — bonnet! No matter. Nothing can change that sweet, serious angel's face. I've fancied myself in love a hundred times; but this draws me out of myself, enables me to face discomfort and difficulty — yes, please God, I think I could die for Molly!

"Now, how shall I begin?"

"Go to Europe," came in a distinct, emphatic series of purrs.

"Yes, exactly; that was in my mind. You're a mind-reader, Jacko. Go to Europe, to mislead her — grow a pair of sidlers there — it takes only a few weeks; those and the blue spectacles — why, Jacko, you are sublime!

¹ The Army has changed its uniform. No more poke bonnets.

"I believe at the end of six months Molly and I will be reading Emerson together. I can manage the whole matter with very little trouble. Stacey the millionaire gone to Europe. Jack — if Jack's the name, — is to hold the fort in Paradise Flats, night and day. I must be a self-made man and no shirker — or else — an unfortunate man who has been in society, lost his money, and seen the folly of it all. Ah, what rare fun!" he rubbed his hands together, laughing at himself — "whichever *rôle* I take, a comedy — not a comedy of errors, I trust. Molly will think I'm driven out of the country by her cruelty. So much the better. I don't care what she thinks. All's fair in love and war. I sha'n't lose touch with my real identity, and I may gain the Lord knows what knowledge. The charms of this sort of life are illusive; who knows what the experiences of an underworld of character, of wonderful human endurance, await me? Gad! it's the brightest thought I ever had! I've something yet to live for!"

CHAPTER XIII

HOW THE BANKER FELT

I tell you it is hard!

THAT evening young Stacey called upon Molly's father, and announced to him his determination to go abroad, and his hope that among foreign scenes he might recover some degree of his lost spirits.

"I don't blame you," said the banker; "but I shall miss you, young man," settling with a huge sigh in his easy-chair, and lighting his pipe. "Perhaps among all your friends and acquaintances no one will miss you as I shall. Your father was my best friend, and I had looked for great things from you in the future. Upon my soul, I hope Molly will never marry—I decline to receive the son-in-law she chooses for me, in advance; and candidly, I don't think she is one of the marrying kind. She goes to her new home in Paradise Flats to-morrow. Joy go with her, say I. The thing grows more and more ludicrous. I feel like laying a hand of iron upon her, and swearing that she shall not. Why, Russell, by Heaven! the house will seem like a tomb without her. It begins to seem so already.

Her cousin is here now, a good enough girl, as wild for the world as Molly is dead against it. She will have a good time, but it's not Molly. I feel as if I were going to her funeral, I do indeed. I could almost wish it were so."

"Let us take courage," said young Stacey, with a high-bred nonchalance that rather astonished the banker. "I have not yet given up all hope. If Molly does penance for a month it will surprise me. Meantime, I must go away. I don't mind telling you that I'm hit hard. No woman can sharpen her wit upon me henceforth. I forswear womankind forever."

"Why should I tell him," he said to himself, with an inward smile, "that I'm going away to grow my whiskers?"

"When will you return?" asked the banker.

"That depends," was the answer. "I can only tell you that when I do come back, you will be the first man I call upon."

"Right, my dear fellow," was the reply, as the banker rose, and gave his hand a parting farewell pressure. "And if that little fool don't come to her senses by that time, I'll disown her, I will, by God — frey!"

CHAPTER XIV

WHAT CRUMP THOUGHT

*No change of fortune's smiles
Can cast my comfort down.*

BABY BASSETT, now five months old, sat up in his basket, and crowed and jumped and talked in the unknown language of babyland the whole day long. No wonder Reine thought there was never, no, *never*, in this or any other land, so wonderful a child. The whole house paid worshipful reverence to him. She herself, as she stood at her work, her white, shapely arms bared almost to the shoulder, her clean cotton dress draped over a brown petticoat, the dim light revealing a Madonna-like face free from all traces of worldly deceit or inherent vice, looked like a picture beside him.

There was one who thought of the Holy Family when she saw them together, and that was Molly.

Sebastian still clung to the bottle, but there was a change in him for the better. The worship of beauty moves the world, it is said; and the baby's beauty was phenomenal. When he took him out to the upper air, more cleanly and better

clothed himself since Molly had come, the singular sweetness of the child's face attracted the notice of every passer-by.

"Oh, the angel!" said one.

"Where did ever such a beauty come from?" was the next query. Sebastian's heart beat high, throbbed with fatherly joy, swelled with fatherly pride. He would sometimes make vows to himself and to Reine, who would say, —

"Now, you know, there is nothing between you and greatness but that miserable drink. Think of *you* living in a cellar! It don't so much matter about me; but oh! you and the little prince, for I'm sure he is the fairest baby that God ever gave to mortal parents." And then Sebastian would protest, and kiss the baby, and kiss his wife, and make believe that they were in a palace, and swear that he would never drink again.

And poor Reine — she also was a little hypocrite, for she would always pretend to believe him.

So munificent was Molly Stanley that Reine could afford to stop work when the clock struck one; set out her husband's dinner if she had any dinner to give him; clear up the cellar room, and lay out the few pretty knick-knacks she had brought as her dowry, — little tidies for the backs of her few chairs, — and otherwise give the poor place a holiday appearance; dress herself in neat, clean clothes; adorn Sebastian with the robes

made for some more fortunate darling, some blessed child who wore heavenly garments perhaps ; and then, if Sebastian was out pursuing his humble, almost degraded calling, considering what riches of genius the man had squandered, she would trot up into Ensign Harry's room, where the sun lay in such broad swathes when there was any sun at all, or into Captain Molly's "den," the most splendid place, in Reine's unsophisticated eyes, that had ever served to house one of the Lord's choicest saints.

For Captain Molly — she was not a captain yet, only a private ; but all the people in Paradise Flats, and some of the soldiers in the Army, had bestowed the title upon her — was a very important little personage just now. She had furnished her room plainly, but with choice furniture that belonged to her own boudoir at home, even to the little cottage piano, where she practised Salvation songs, particularly when beautiful Baby Bassett was near, his glorious eyes glowing like stars, and following every movement of the white, well-shaped fingers.

It was an education to Reine to visit that sanctuary of holiness ; for to her it was like going into a church, and listening to the lessons that point to a happy eternity. Sometimes Nan came in with her violin. Molly was teaching her to read music, and the child made rapid progress. And Molly believed herself very happy, and at times

was so. Her sweet young face, so refined, so full of that subtle magnetism that attracts, not the grosser senses, but the inward purity, if there be an atom in the soul of man, never had been more strikingly developed than now, in her rare renunciation — not for the hope of place or power, but for the opportunity of lifting grosser minds to the level of her own. Her father need not have been ashamed of her, even in her poke bonnet ; and as she sat there, serene and gracious, even Ensign Harry looked and worshipped.

So far she was contented with the lot she had chosen. At first the tramp through those graceless streets, the taunts of the gamins, the scoffers, the lackeys, and even of nicer people, who were born for better things, oppressed and mortified her ; but she grew out of that. In the little halls whither they drifted, led always by the awkward instruments that, musically, trod on each other's toes, there was work to do ; and she forgot everything in the joy of seeing poor wretches brought out of the slough of despair, out of a life-long devil worship, to the worship of the true God. There it was ! she saw it for herself. Cast-aways made penitent, lunatics clothed and in their right mind, worshippers of the bottle made worshippers of the Christ. She examined the texture of their new garments, and found them fine and white ; all the red stains washed out of them ; all the black warp of sin and a guilty conscience

made clear and clean, so that she dared to stand side by side with them. She went with Ensign Harry to homes that were plague-spots, saw faces that haunted her with their evil gleams for days and days ; but when, after a heavy raid on the citadel of the castaways, she returned home, she felt that, at least, she was living for a definite object. No rich ball-dress to disrobe herself of ; no memories of a pressure of the hand here, a dance with this military snob or that moneyed idiot ; no recalling of vapid compliments with the reflection that she must go through this again to-morrow, and after to-morrow—and for a thousand to-morrows to come, and all through the seasons ; the same scents of flowers, the same well-bred people, the same insolence of power, the same incense burned before vanity, the same lisp, the same intolerable sameness. Not for one moment did she regret the loss of her old associates.

It was a clinging hand she thought of, a pair of wistful eyes, a sorrow-laden cry. “O miss, if I’d only a knowed ye before, knowed that ye’d speak to the likes of one of us, God knows I’d been a better girl. But I’m going to try, miss. I never can be so good as you ; but as God lives, I’ll try!”

Ah, that was sweeter music than all the rhapsodies and mockeries and fal-fals of the four hundred of her set who were agonizing over the thought of her downfall. There was work for

every moment, — organizing, helping, and redeeming. She had absolutely no time to wonder at herself ; to wonder what the world said ; to wonder even over what might be going on at home — her father's palace home.

One thing she had stipulated for, — that her father would allow her to write to him every week. Through the medium of these letters, which constituted a sort of diary, she hoped to soften his heart ; to lead him to think less of dollars and cents, and more of human souls.

Little Nan could play very sweetly now. Sometimes Molly contrived cheerful entertainments — of course they were on a small scale, although the rooms were rather spacious ; and little Nan's violin followed the cottage piano, and whoever had the gift of song or of poetry helped the young hostess whenever the nights came. The invitation went from room to room, but there were scorners even in Paradise Flats and terrible scorners.

"If you goes nigh them Damnationists, I'll knock the head of you clean off your shoulders," said Crump the tailor to his yellow-haired daughter, a blue-eyed, weak-looking girl, but who had a leaning towards higher culture, and had taken a great fancy to Ensign Harry and Captain Molly.

And the Haggertys and McNattys, O'Rourkes and Hardys, all the Micks and Scotch Dougals, and fighting Englishmen, and moon-faced Germans, and lank, lean Yankees, and yellow-faced

Southerners, who had strayed from their Virginia fastnesses, where every father's ancestry had once held castle and fortress against the siege of the enemy, — all of them, right under the shadow of the temple of safety, cursed and turned away.

CHAPTER XV

HOW THE FIDDLE CROONED

I feel no care of coin.

NANNY GARTIA had found her sojourn with Mrs. McKiseth a very pleasant one. Mrs. McKiseth was one of those round little women, a very roly-poly of a woman, quick and witty, pretty and pleasant, her warm Irish heart all sympathy with any body or creature that suffered. She did tailoring, and cooked delicious dishes out of scraps, and never a bite or sup she had that somebody was not welcome to half of it. A comfortable gray cat, a chirping canary, and Nan with the "fiddle," as she called the instrument, constituted the family. Here Nanny practised when she could for the noise the children made on every side; and the dear old violin responded with a loving voice, that sometimes, under the manipulation of Nan's little fingers, gave out tones that melted one's heart.

"I think I can make it laugh, and I believe I *could* make it cry," Nan said one day.

"It cries and laughs of itself, colleen," said Mrs. McKiseth. "I've even heard it whisper o'

nights," she continued, making the sign of the cross, for she was a good Catholic. "Indade, when the moon's been shining in its face, an' ye left it hangin' on the wall, an' the wind sighing a bit outside, I've heard it croonin' so soft and fine you might 'a' thought it was its own shadow in the moonlight that did it."

"Oh!" laughed the child, "it must be a nice fiddle, then. Everybody who hears it speaks of its sweet tones. I expect that fiddle is worth a great deal of money."

"Indade, I wouldn't part wid it for the treasury of the United States," — with a vague idea of a house full of greenbacks, — said Mrs. McKiseth, as she went from chair to table brushing and brightening the old and scanty furniture. She was a mirror of neatness, was Mrs. McKiseth. The frill of her little round cap was scarcely whiter than the floor under her busy feet.

"But then, if it would bring me an education," said Nan, gravely considering the matter.

"An education!" and the little Irishwoman stood and looked at the child; "what kind of an education is it ye'd be havin'?"

"One that poor papa would like. 'Ah,' he used to say, 'if I only had the strength to teach you, perhaps you could make your fortune with old King Solomon;' and then he would take it, and look at it so lovingly that it made the tears come to my eyes. Many a time he's hugged it, looking

down as you would at a baby, saying that he couldn't remember the time when he hadn't heard it or seen it, for his father led an orchestra too. It always seems to me as if some of my father's soul went into that old fiddle; is that a wicked thought?"

"Ah, cushla!" said the little red-cheeked old woman thoughtfully, "the soul goes where the good God sends it. I sometimes thinks meself, when them low notes go wailing through the air, that maybe there's a soul prisoned there. Don't the Holy Scriptures speak of the souls in prison; and if it's not your father, bless him, it may be some other musical soul. But Lord help us, how we are talking, and there's them potaties a-shivering widthout their skins! I'll pop 'em into the bilin' water at oncet."

Captain Molly held her opinion with regard to the violin. She knew that Russell Stacey — "poor fellow," she murmured to herself — would have been only too glad to buy it. He played himself with very fair success, and she rightly judged that the instrument was valuable. She was also confident that the girl Nan had genius of a high order; and it semed pitiful to her that this bright genius, with her Italian eyes and passion for all things beautiful, should lack any good thing. So she cast about how she could help her.

The thought occurred to her that if her own music-teacher, Professor Andromo, also an Italian

by birth, could be prevailed upon to aid the child by instructing her for half rates, — Molly to pay the tuition fees, — the experience would be beneficial to both master and pupil. But how to beard the aristocratic lion in his den? All the *haut ton* went to him. Could he find time to devote an hour or two a week to this child? Would he soil his delicate fingers with the bow of one of the *canaille*, though she was of his own country? As for the girl, it would be fields of asphodel to her. Now she felt the need of a warm, loving friendship such as she had hoped might exist between Russell Stacey and herself.

“He would have entered into it with so much interest,” she said, blushing a little, “for my sake. Yes; and it would have been *all* for my sake; and now he is out of the country. I couldn’t call upon him if I would. After all, he was a high-minded fellow, considering he belonged to the world, and was rich enough to be as wicked as he pleased.”

This was after one of Nan’s daily visits, in which the child had shown evidences of great progress, and a keen appreciation of certain lessons beyond her age.

Captain Molly sat down to her desk to straighten out the confusion incident to her many interruptions, when there was a tap at the door.

“Come in,” was the cheery call. She knew that no one would come at that hour but Ensign Harry.

"I don't want to disturb you," said the ensign as she stood on the threshold, and Molly saw at once that something was amiss.

"You look pale," she said, rising from her papers, and going towards her friend.

"I feel a little ill," was the half-gasping reply.

Molly placed a chair for the white-faced woman, and stood before her with folded hands, all solicitude. She noticed now how drawn were the delicate lips, and even in the curves of her temples were evidences of some great trouble.

"Shall I send for a doctor?" Molly asked, thinking how soft and beautiful were the outlines of the pretty English face.

"Oh, no ; I shall feel better soon. I—have—had a shock," she articulated. Presently a little color came to her cheeks, her breathing was more natural, and she could talk.

Placing a piece of newspaper in her friend's hand, she said, "Read that."

Molly read, —

"The Rev. Henry Flagler, assistant rector of St. Blank's in Hertfordshire, England, will deliver an address on English and American S. S. Work, on Sunday evening, at St. Luke's Chapel.

"The Rev. Mr. Flagler is a young English clergyman of great promise, and of unusual powers of eloquence, etc."

Captain Molly read it through, and then looked up inquiringly.

Ensign Harry smiled — a faint, quivering smile that hardly curled the sensitive lips.

“You know I gave him up,” she said.

“But I never dreamed he was a clergyman,” was Molly’s answer.

“Ah! that was three years ago. He was in deacon’s orders then, did not take full orders till two years afterward. I—I gave him up,” she went on faintly, the same drawn look coming over her face.

“How could you? and he destined to be a leader of men!” escaped Molly’s lips.

“I did — of course I did. But — but that is the state church in England. It means, in my eyes, oppression of the people; and my own family and all my ancestry were Dissenters. He stood to his colors, — I can’t say but what I honored him for that, — but I could not go with him. He was ambitious, and liked the good things of this world, — wealth, honors, and in a certain sense, courted them. I felt differently; I did not like the Church, was not in harmony with it; my education, pursuits, and aims led to different results. We could not agree, loving him though I did almost idolatrously, God forgive me if it was a sin; so I cast in my lot with the poor, the unfortunate, the vicious, the fallen. He tried to dissuade me from the enterprise; we both grew angry, stubborn, perhaps vindictive. So I became an outcast for opinion’s sake. That is what he and my people said. Oh,

yes!" to Molly's look of inquiry; "they would have had me marry him sooner than join the Salvationists. There they drew the line — despising them, their banners, their drums, their military rules; but I took the matter into my own hands. Do you know," and she smiled through glistening tears, "my great-grandfather on my father's side was a reformer, and died the death of a martyr. I wonder if his spirit could have been influencing me that I took this step?"

"Do you regret it?" asked Molly.

"Regret it!" she replied in a brisker voice; "no, I do not regret it; but you must understand, in order to appreciate my present — foolishness — weakness indeed" — and she stamped her small foot — "how much I loved him. He was everything to me. Whatever typifies the best and most beautiful things in the power of earth or heaven to bestow, that he was to me, — air, sunshine, life itself. You see," she added, faltering, "we knew and loved each other for ten long years. But to win heaven is better than to enjoy mere earthly love" — she looked up with pleading and wistfulness in her blue eyes. "I thought so then; I think so still. You and I have both left good homes; yours more splendid perhaps, because ours was a country house, with steps leading everywhere, — into great sunny rooms, into little cosey nooks covered outside with vines, into old-fashioned corners, out into a bright old garden, the pride of all the gene-

rations gone before. I shall never stop if I think of that, — the peach- and plum-trees trained against the wall, billows of bloom in the sunlight, clouds of faint gold in the twilight where the marigolds grew — oh, my old, happy home ! ” and she bent over, her hands at her eyes, rocking a little to and fro.

“ My dear, you are homesick,” said Molly gently.

“ Homesick — oh, no ! He that putteth his hand to the plough, you know, I forget — oh, yes, I was going to ask you if you regret the step you have taken.”

“ I — find great happiness in the work,” said Molly truthfully.

“ Yes, I do — I did ; but, you see, there are nine of them at home, away across the wild sea — and you are near your father. Nothing very terrible could happen to you. And now to have this fearful cross to bear — for — do you know — I think,” — she clasped both hands over her heart, — “ I think he has come in the hope of finding me ! Is it vanity ? or is it his heart whispering to mine ? I can’t tell. I only know I feel so. I — I’m a little wild about it,” and she laughed softly, “ a little off, I suppose, as some people put it — but I don’t want him to see me in my uniform.” She laughed again, but it was more like a sob.

“ Don’t think I’m ashamed of it under ordinary circumstances. I’m proud of it,” she went on ;

"but is it a momentary weakness I ought to be ashamed of?" and then she folded her hands, and sank back helpless.

"Oh, no! it is very natural," said Molly soothingly. "You are sure — of course you are sure — that he is still true to you?" In a moment she felt she had committed a rudeness, and said so.

"Not in the least. I have not heard from home for the last six months. Oh, my dear! if he should be married, should have brought — his — wife — here — then God would have taken it all out of my hands. But what am I saying? If I could not be tempted five years ago — how could I dare to dally with temptation now? Well, the chapel is not far."

"Shall you go?" Molly asked, seeing, as in a lightning flash, how this woman loved and suffered.

"What! in my Salvation clothes?" She smiled faintly.

"Why not?" Molly asked.

"Would you?"

At this direct question Molly swerved a little mentally, and her glance went towards the window. A miserable woman lower down the street was hanging out clothes on the small square of shed that served for a yard, a yard in the air. She remembered that that very woman, too low, indeed, to bear the sacred name, had laughed at

her. Church ! where all was rigid propriety, full dress, after the fashion of church-goers, velvet and feathers, brocade and lace, — even in a back seat, with the poke bonnet, a cambric gown twelve cents a yard, — “would you?” echoed in her ears.

“My dear, we are not bound to carry sackcloth everywhere. There are no cast-iron rules forbidding any style but this,” she said. “Even I brought some of my vanities here, — a box with three worldly bonnets in it, and gloves that have been to several balls. Have we any right to make the congregation stare? I think not. Neither are we nuns, because we have forsworn the world. We are two earnest, and, I hope, honest Christian women. We can dress as plainly as we please; but we will be conventional for once, and go to the chapel together.”

“Oh, you dear soul! how good you are! you don’t scold me as I am sure Lieutenant Rider would. But,” and she spoke almost wildly, “why should I go at all? What good will it do me? If he seeks our haunts, let him see me — I don’t care! I shall be proud of it. Would you go?”

“I — think, perhaps — not,” said Captain Molly. The girl’s head drooped; she drew a long sigh.

“My heart is absolutely hungry to see him,” she half sobbed. “Maybe it is just possible that I might — not care so much — after — you know he may be changed;” she stood up and took up

Molly's hands in hers. "I may be disenchanted — or — or — he *may* — be — *married!*"

The pressure on Molly's fingers was absolutely painful. Her heart ached for her friend, but the divine instinct of womanhood came to her assistance.

"You would not have had the opportunity otherwise," she said softly; "now, perhaps, he is sent here for your spiritual good. Go and hear him."

CHAPTER XVI

THREE WORLDLY HATS

Nothing is troublesome that we do willingly.

CAPTAIN MOLLY went to the closet, and took down a milliner's box, a slight pasteboard affair, with the name of the most fashionable milliner in the city printed upon the cover. Opening it, she displayed two modest but elegant black hats, trimmed very plainly with narrow satin ribbon, and the most costly flowers daintily arranged in the prevailing style. Besides these there were a bonnet, two fans, and a package of gloves.

"I thought perhaps some situation might arise in which I should need them," Molly said. "The gloves are tan, and will go nicely with our black dresses. You shall have either hat you choose," she went on, turning smilingly to her friend.

"But if we are seen going out in these," Ensign Harry said hesitatingly.

"We shall rise in the estimation of every soul in Paradise — *lost*," retorted Molly. "How fortunate that you saw this notice in time! The lecture takes place to-night, our off night; and I confess I want to see this zealous young preacher myself."

"But — he must not see us," said Ensign Harry with some agitation, holding the hat in her hand.

"Do you suppose there is the slightest ghost of a chance — though love is quick-sighted," Molly laughed; "we will take back seats."

"There will be ushers, though," Ensign Harry made reply.

"Put on your hat," said Molly, and then stood back, her head on one side, her glance critical.

"Try the bonnet," she went on, lifting deftly the pretty trifle of lace and silk. "You will look better in it. Ah, yes, that tiny aigrette was just what was needed. My dear, I hope he *will* see you. You don't know how pretty you are!"

The cheeks took on again that faint English tinge of rose-color, and an almost divine light sparkled for one moment in the sweet blue eyes; eyes made only for love glances, — soft, translucent deeps, with a rich sombre semicircle underneath which only added to their brilliancy.

"You must not stir the sleeping vanity in my heart," she said, smiling. "When I was a girl, I *was* vain. I have been doing penance for it all my life — oh, so vain! because people called me pretty. Oh, I am wretched indeed! I ought not to go, and yet I must go. It will be only disaster to me, I fear."

"Nonsense, dear; you are brave enough to fight his Satanic Majesty at all times — can you not accept the result as God's will?" said Molly.

"I ought to — I must," said the young ensign. "I have not looked at it in that light before, nor thought of my motto, —

'Let all fail, if Heaven fail not.'"

As they left Paradise Flats they met Sebastian Bassett walking home with his little boy. The beautiful face lighted up with a babe's quick, heavenly smile, and he held out his arms to them.

Reine followed behind, very petite, bright, and delicate-looking in her new muslin dress, which Molly had finished for her only the day before.

"We've been out walking," whispered the happy little wife and mother. "*He* has not had a bad time for a week — and God bless you!" she added from a full heart.

"That baby don't belong here," said Ensign Harry softly, as they walked on.

"Oh! I don't know," Molly began to protest.

"There's nothing earthly about him," she went on; "I always think of him as belonging to another sphere — in fine, he is more of heaven than earth. How came he to be born of earthly parents?"

"To save them perhaps," said Molly, "or at least one of them. You might say of Sebastian, there seldom comes across one's path a man so handsome, and more talented — and yet" —

After that the silence was unbroken.

CHAPTER XVII

IN THE RECTOR'S PEW

In fine aristocratic state.

THE church was full, and brilliantly lighted. Molly and her friend were given seats in the side forming one wing of the chapel, which was built in the shape of a Maltese cross ; and Harry shrank into the corner as far from the glare of the light as possible.

There were flowers in the chancel ; and on the edge of the broad, velvet-lined lectern stood a vase of calla-lilies, every one a perfect blossom, white, massive, and fragrant. The main part of the chancel was out of sight from where the two young women sat ; but the rolling tones of the great organ penetrated into every nook and corner, like waves flowing and ebbing, soothing the turbulence of thought and feeling among the worshippers, and giving poor Ensign Harry, whose hearing and sight grew every moment more and more acute, the sensation of being borne aloft on its harmonious swell, till sight and sense were soothed by the entrance of the choir-boys, headed by the precentor and followed by the rector, behind

whom, with slow step and downcast eyes, came a young, tall fellow clad in the gown and stole.

Molly felt her gown grasped hard, and knew that this was the Reverend Mr. Flagler. She had no time to form any conclusions as to his appearance; for she felt her friend Harry leaning against her, and feared that she had fainted. She turned. The English girl was very pale, her face indeed resembled chiselled marble, but only their eyes met. She made no sign; but Molly drew a little closer, obtained possession of her hand, and thus they sat, the one nervous and constrained, the other striving to impart her own strength for the benefit of her friend.

In the rector's pew sat two women; one the wife of the resident clergyman, the other not so young, but dressed with fine accuracy in a tan-colored silk-and-wool travelling dress, her bonnet nodding with tiny plumes, her small hands exquisitely gloved, in one of them a prayer-book bound in old ivory. In her face there was lack of spiritual beauty; but the correct classical outlines, the heavy lidded blue eyes, and the faultless complexion betrayed a Saxon origin, and an air aristocratic breathed from all her movements.

Molly's heart sank. She alone, who had sometimes resorted to the chapel on Sunday evenings, Russell Stacey being her escort, knew which was the rector's pew; and she said to herself,—

“That woman is rich, refined, well-born, and

worldly — and, saddest of all, she is the wife of the Reverend Mr. Flagler.”

After the service, the speaker of the evening came forward.

Molly’s grasp enclosed a hand as cold as ice, which trembled violently as the young clergyman commenced.

Smooth, flowing, versatile, sometimes severely classical, the words flowed on. Molly was critical. It seemed to her that the speaker looked round more than was consistent with delicacy, a bold self-assertion in his glance.

“He is also effeminate,” she said to herself. “That face, with the over-large eyes and the small mouth, the white skin, and the smooth expressionless forehead, is not the face of a man willing, if need be, to fight for the truth. Prosperity is his only hope; poverty would make him pusillanimous, and a slave to the rich. I don’t like him.”

But now something happened.

The man, with his sweeping glances, at last took in the beautiful, serious face of Ensign Harry. For one second he turned white, swayed, and clutched at the pulpit; everybody saw his agitation, everybody wondered.

Then he took from some place beneath, a glass of water, and wet his parched lips, braced himself anew, and went on with his well-ordered address; but never again did his eyes wander from the written page.

"After all, he must have loved her," Molly said to herself with a sad, foreboding heart.

Amid that low, decorous, murmuring swell of voices that goes up the aisle with the people as they leave the temple, one could hear now and then the comments of the congregation.

"Very nice," said a woman near Molly, "quite eloquent! Did you see the lady in the rector's pew? That is his bride; this is their wedding-trip. She is very rich, indeed, enormously wealthy, so I hear, and a lady by title. Yes, he made a very fine match; clergymen are sometimes quite fortunate, don't you know? Oh, yes! some older than he, I should think; but that bonnet, heavens! Wasn't it a dream! Well, she can afford it; she has millions."

The ensign clutched Molly's dress just then, and as they went out Molly passed an arm about her. It was quite late, and very dark.

"Don't speak to me — don't please say a word," the English girl whispered almost convulsively. "It is all over — and I — am punished."

And then, in less than a minute afterwards, in a voice full of anguish, —

"Why don't you talk? O Molly, Molly! say something to comfort me or I shall go mad."

"Let all fail, if Heaven fail not," Molly replied in a soft, sweet voice.

"Oh, thank you, thank you, thank you!" the girl spoke rapidly; "all *has* failed. How do I

know but Heaven will? O Molly, he saw me!" she gasped.

"Yes, he saw you; that was evident to me, and puzzling to many, no doubt," Molly answered.

"A mist came over my eyes. Didn't he stop?" she further asked.

"He not only stopped, but he almost lost his wits. Somebody said, coming out, that very likely he had spasms of the heart. People always acted that way who did."

"The voyage of memory," murmured Ensign Harry. "Oh, no! he can't have forgotten. And his face—what did you think of it? Ah, me, why do I ask?"

"It was not to me the face of a high-toned gentleman. High-toned I mean in the highest and best sense. The man likes good dinners and flat-tery—moderate doses; and he couldn't preach for his life if he didn't write his sermons."

"O Molly! is that your estimate of the man I love?"

"Of the man you *did* love," said Molly, the slightest tinge of severity in her voice. "It is a sin to love him now that he is married." Harry was silent after that.

"Let me go into your room, dear," she said, as they went up the stairs together.

She took off the pretty trifle of silk and feathers.

Just then, as she held it in her hand, came a

stirring blast from a cornet, and the click of castanets, accompanied by the roll of the drum. The Salvation Army was in the street below. Both girls listened as the small body of Salvationists marched along on their way from evening meeting. The tears stood in Ensign Harry's eyes.

"Blessed little company!" she said, her voice trembling — "humble, faithful, happy! Here, Molly. Thanks for your kindness," as she handed her the bonnet. "I'll never take off the badge of my — liberty again. No matter where I go, High Church or Low, I will never be ashamed of my order or the regimentals, never! Don't cry, Molly; the conflict is over. God shall have all my heart from this time henceforth. Forevermore!"

CHAPTER XVIII

COUSIN LUCY'S REIGN

The road to home happiness lies over small stepping-stones.

I saw you last night in St. Luke's Chapel, clothed, and seemingly in your right mind. What did it mean? Why were you at the lecture delivered by the celebrated English philanthropist? Come back to us. Last night you were *at home*. It cannot be that you prefer the slums. Your cousin wishes you to come. She is lonely (I don't remember that you ever considered it lonely here). I had a letter from Russell Stacey. He was in Paris, but said nothing definite as to his return. Let me hear that you have come to your senses. Isn't there a commandment in some old book: "Honor thy father and thy mother"? To be sure it don't say *obey*, but I am old-fashioned enough to think that to a father obedience is due. However, I don't force you, remember. If you won't leave, stay till you tire of them or they tire of you.

YOUR FATHER.

Molly wrote often to her father, but the banker had never answered her letters. This was the first word she had received from him. The sight of Molly dressed in the old style, as far as her conscience approved, so touched his exacting heart that this short note was the result. Lucy, his niece, had been very happy for a time in the midst of all her finery. It was so different from

her own home, — a small, stuffy house, where one always knew what was going to be served for dinner by the smell as soon as the front door was opened!

Her father was only the cashier of his rich banker brother-in-law. There were several boys in the family, and they ruled the house. Lucy when at her own home always felt herself at the mercy of "the boys." They were rude and mischievous, boisterous and unruly. They stole her confections when she had any to steal; hid her books, her workbasket, even her hats, for fun; and played the most preposterous practical jokes upon her. They were all handsome, hearty, healthy fellows; but neither father nor mother knew the secret of governing their children, and consequently chaos reigned.

When invited to become an *habituée* of her uncle's house her delight knew no bounds. The large, cool mansion, with her own parlor and boudoir, seemed literally like paradise to her. To have her own maid, plenty of spending money, and a fine wardrobe, was as near being in a state of beatitude as she could imagine. Molly's maid stayed on, for she was sure that Miss Stanley would come back some time. She could not endure that any one should take the place of her well-beloved young lady, with whom she had lived ever since Molly went into long frocks.

"*She* never give herself no airs, she didn't,"

muttered the indignant girl; "any one could see which was the lady!"

As for Lucy, she revelled in rich dresses, bought them, wore them, gave them away, like one to the manner born. She still suffered from "the boys," who made occasional raids upon the house, and coaxed her for money, and left the prints of their soiled boots upon the delicate carpets. And it irked her to rise at stated hours to take breakfast with her uncle. She managed to comply with the rules, and did the honors with sleepy eyes and tousled hair.

Molly had declined more than half of her invitations to society gatherings; Lucy accepted every one with eagerness. Consequently she was somewhat jaded that first winter, and her uncle often waited for her till the toast was cold.

"My dear, Molly never kept me waiting," he said now and then; and his very soul rebelled against the edict he had given forbidding his daughter the house.

"The little fool! the little blank fool!" he would mutter between his teeth — only his profanity was very much more pronounced. "But she is true grit!" and he ended with a fit of musing admiration for her spirit, pluck, and courage. He seldom went into society, so he heard but few of the remarks of the busybodies who pitied him and condemned Molly in the same breath.

Home was not so pleasant now. He was proud

and very fond of Molly. Her stately beauty, — at least, she seemed stately to him, though she was by no means tall; her sweet good-morning kiss, — Lucy seldom kissed him, and he did not care for her to do so; her real love for him, for himself alone, — Lucy's face beamed only when he gave her the allowance she dearly loved to spend; her whole gracious loveliness in all home ministrations, — were constantly in his memory.

Lucy sometimes helped him on with his coat, she kept his dressing-gown and slippers in the right places, she tried to remember what made for his comfort, but she was not always successful. Molly never forgot things. Her habits were fixed.

Mr. Stanley went down to his office one day thoroughly vexed. It was the night after the lecture, where he had seen Molly "clothed, and in her right mind," as he phrased it. Lucy had come down when breakfast was half over; and if there was one thing that he hated more than another, it was to sit down to the table alone. He had only glanced at the girl; for there were traces of negligence in her toilet, and she was not as pleasant to the sight as when in full dress and beaming on an escort — the only hours when she really lived. So, before she had even drunk her coffee, he left the table, pushed back his chair, and without word or glance left the room and the house.

It was a little surly perhaps, but trifles worried him now. All the way to the bank, however, he

took some satisfaction in the consciousness that she had been perhaps as uncomfortable as himself, for he had never left her that way before.

He was in his office when one of the clerks brought him a business paper.

"I see," he said, "that is Stacey's signature. Who is the man?"

"I don't know; he was vouched for by Captain Carey, who happened to be in the bank."

"Oh, well! that's all right; let him have the five thousand. But stop, I'll take a look at him."

He came out of the office, still talking with the cashier.

A man with a travelled air, dainty mutton-chop whiskers, bronze-colored hair, and blue spectacles, stood at the counter.

"Acquainted with Stacey?" the banker asked, as the man was about to move away.

"Oh, yes! very intimately," was the quiet answer; "he was with me on the Continent."

"And you left him well, I hope?"

"Yes, I left him very well; good-morning," and the stranger went out.

"Singular! I can't for the life of me make out who that gentleman reminds me of," muttered the banker.

"Even Stanley don't know me, and he's the keenest reader of faces I ever met," reflected Stacey, as he walked down the steps of the bank. "There would be no bar to my social advance-

ment on the score of appearance. It's odd to feel one's self descending in the social scale, even to go into society a stranger," he smiled to himself as he walked down the street, meeting no one to do him homage, though he frequently passed a familiar face.

CHAPTER XIX

THE PROFESSOR'S VERDICT

The meaning of harmony goes deep.

THE windows at Professor Andromo's were open to the soft breezes of the sea. He lived in an unfashionable quarter of the city ; but in spite of his social surroundings, he was the musical lion of the day. As a pianist, his reputation was supreme in that paradise of professors. The violin in his hands told wild stories of love and romance, and he was petitioned by courtly dames to give lessons to their sons and daughters at the most fabulous prices.

Opposite the house was an old-fashioned square, daintily laid out with flowering shrubs, trees, and Southern plants. Iron seats wrought with artistic finish stood at various distances.

On one of them sat Nanny Gartia. The quiver of blossoms in the soft air stirred her soul to melody ; and her deep, lustrous, spiritual eyes moved as if entranced from one floral beauty to another. She was quite neatly dressed, yet bore the imprint of poverty in some curiously defined way. Perhaps it was the stamp that penury, suffering,

and self-denial had left upon her face, and that clung to her personality. Her hair, abundant and carefully dressed, flowed in loose, short curls from under a prim little hat ; and lying across her lap the old green baize bag, held in place by a shapely hand, appealed pathetically to the passers-by, proclaiming her vocation as that of a street musician.

Once or twice the child looked opposite, up to the window banked and hanging in exquisite wreaths of color, and contrasting delicately with the pearly gray tones of the great house, built over a century ago.

There was no monotony in the scene. Up the stony pathways carriages were rolling, and big drags, drawn by fat, portly horses, wended their way to the lower part of the city. The trees were all of a tremble, catching the sunlight in diamond dots, and making rich tracery on the dun-colored paths underneath.

Presently the door opened opposite, and a young girl came out.

"She is dressed like all the rest," murmured Nan with a little impatient sigh, — "silks and fine laces ! And many of them come in carriages," she went on, as a splendid equipage, with glints of yellow light on the panels, drove up, and the coachman opened the door for his dainty mistress. "They're *all* rich, I guess ; none of them poor, fatherless girls like me. How many scholars he

must have ! Oh, if I hadn't promised Miss Stanley, I wouldn't dare go ; and I don't know as I will. What will he care for *me* ? Yet Miss Stanley is quite sure he will be good to me. Ah ! nobody seems to be coming out any more ; now it is your turn, little beggar."

She drew from the pocket of her flannel dress Molly's letter in a square white envelope.

Meantime the professor was through with work for the day. He left the piano after originating a short, sweet prelude, and stood looking into the square, his face framed in vines and pink blossoms.

"After all, what stupid work," he said to himself. "Pupils with no ear for the nicety of expression that all music demands ; pupils with blunt fingers, who scare away the elements of precision and delicacy ; pupils who wander in their minds, and turn to me with blank faces, then hammer and sigh and cry, and go at hammering again. Perdition take them all, I say !"

There was a knock at the door.

"Come in !" he said. Then in a more impatient voice, "Come in ; don't you hear ?"

The door opened. The great professor stared and wondered. Never had a creature so hopelessly plebeian crossed that threshold before. Generally his usher, a gorgeous creature in gold and blue, heralded the visitor with a card on a silver salver. How came this one unheralded ?

"The door was open, sir ; I didn't ring, but came up-stairs," said the child in a frightened voice.

"Ah ! I'll give Paine the devil for this," growled the professor ; then seeing the frightened look in the child's eyes, he changed his tones. "Well, well, quick, what do you want ? I haven't a dime — no, nor a penny ; but, good Lord, there's a quarter. Take it, and go. I can't waste my time, youngster."

"Oh, sir, I ain't a beggar ! Did you think I'd come a-begging to *you* ? I don't want the quarter, sir ; I earn quarters myself sometimes. But see, my father was a musician, and I — oh, I'd like to forgot — here's a letter for you, sir."

The child had hardly recovered from her fright ; but she was a brave little thing, and pressed the lump down that kept rising in her throat. This man looked so grand, so utterly out of reach in his black silk-velvet dressing-gown, and the plush smoking-cap, under which his gray hair curled in crisp rings. His eyes were piercing too, and seemed to look her through and through. Yes, she was very brave in keeping her courage up and the tears down.

Taking the letter, the professor went towards the window, where Nan's startled, anxious glances took in all the glory of the summer Southern verdure. Then he put on his gold-rimmed glasses, and read as follows : —

DEAR PROFESSOR ANDROMO, — You know I have been your pupil ever since I was six years old — that's for twelve years. Now I have a favor to ask you, a very *great* favor. I don't know that you will care to grant it, but I hope you will.

Little Nanny Gartia, who will hand you this letter, is a *protégée* of mine. I think, although a poor little orphan of Italian parentage, that she is a diamond in the rough. If not, then surely I am no judge of precious things in human nature. She has also a violin that, it appears to me, must be of great value; for it has been in her family for nearly two hundred years. As far as I can learn, her great-great-grandfather played upon it; and it has the appearance of extreme age, as well as the silvery, resonant tones of a masterpiece. Please, dear Professor, don't frighten her with your patrician manner, and tell me by her, the very least you will give her one lesson a week for; that is, if in your estimation she is worth the trouble. I have found her a good, willing little girl. All her family were musical, and she seems gifted with remarkable genius.

She will show you "King Solomon."

Very truly your friend and pupil,

MOLLY STANLEY.

"Ah!" and the face took on a gleam of good nature as he pulled his long, drooping mustache, "I can't refuse what my child asks me, can I?" he looked up reflectively. His child she had always been, from the time he first looked over her golden head at the grand piano, and laughed because the little feet could not reach the pedals.

Then he cast a furtive glance at the child.

"Good eyes," he said under his breath. Pres-

ently he saw a solitary tear rolling over the pale cheek, and the sight touched him.

"But who in the deuce is King Solomon?" he asked.

Her eyes lighted at the old familiar name.

"It's the fiddle, sir," she said.

"Ah, I thought so! You have an old violin," he added briskly. "Want to sell?"

"Oh, no, sir! it belonged to my father, and — my father is dead," was the answer.

"Ah, so! dead is he? Did he play?"

"He played in the orchestra—he was a leader;" but after his long sickness he lost the place, and at last he had to play in the streets for mother and me. Mother is dead too," she added in a low voice.

"So! alone, are you?"

The child looked up to speak, drew a deep, sobbing breath, and as her eyes filled, nodded.

"Let me see the fiddle."

She gladly released the instrument from the old baize bag, and checked her sobs.

He took it in his practised hands, noticed the depth and richness of the varnish where varnish was still left, and all the minute and varied matters of age, whistling softly to himself. The girl recalled her courage. Something in his face heartened her.

"Where did your father get this instrument?" he asked.

"He always had it ; grandfather and his father all played ; it's very old, sir," she made answer.

He nodded several times. He played a chord on the grand piano, and listened to the ghost of a sigh that echoed on the strings of the instrument as he held it to his ear. She remembered having seen her father do that. A great light illumined his strong face.

"Do you play ?" he asked, smiling down at her.

"Just a little, sir."

"You hold it in this way, I suppose," he said, reversing it.

"Oh, no !" with a shocked look ; "papa wouldn't let me, though I wanted to at first. He said no true artist would play in that fashion." She had forgotten all fear — her eyes sparkled.

"Your father was right. What is the tone, I wonder ?" he asked banteringly. "If I am to give you a hundred dollars for it, I wish to know how it sounds."

"I don't want to sell it. It gives me my living. A hundred dollars wouldn't last long. But some day, perhaps, I can play with excellence — and — my father wouldn't like me to sell it."

"He's gone, you know," was the response.

She shook her head.

"He loved it so, I think he stays near me — to protect it."

The answer seemed to amuse the professor, who turned away to conceal a smile.

"Then, if he is so near, he will like to hear you play." She still held the bow.

"Imagine yourself out-of-doors," he continued. "Look towards the park. Now let me hear its tone."

She placed the violin in position. The man's eyes sparkled. No fault to be found there. She lifted the bow, her poise and carriage were both correct. Then she drew the bow lightly but firmly over the strings. One moment she faltered. Then she looked at the square beyond, the flowers in the window, the blue sky overhead, and took courage. It was almost like being on the street.

The professor stood near, and a little behind her, his piercing eyes noting every movement. He stood with folded arms. There was a glow in his face at the first movement. She played a short Italian air, and well. Had he found at last what he had been searching for so long, — the priceless pearl of genius?

"Your father taught you to hold the bow," he said.

"Yes, sir. He was sick all the time for the last year, and I had to sing, so I was too tired to study much; but whenever I tried to play" — she hesitated — "it came to me."

"What came to you?" he asked with an amused, almost comical smile.

She seemed searching for words. "I don't

know, sir," the child faltered. "The feeling as if it knew what I wanted, and could answer me like another voice. So — I learned to love it — and — and that's all I know."

"It's all you need to know. That will carry you through. So, my child, you would like to study, I suppose," he said.

"Oh, if I could! But I haven't any money, only to buy food; but I would starve myself almost, if I might only learn."

"No need of that, no need of that," the professor said smilingly, to veil the tremor in his voice. "The money is all right; somebody has pledged to pay for you."

"It's Captain Molly, then!" cried the child, with a wild cry of delight. "Oh, she's an angel!" she went on in irrepressible gratitude. "God bless her! God bless her!"

"Captain!" blurted the professor, puzzled.

"Yes, sir; she's in the Salvation Army," was the response.

It was too much for the professor, who broke into a fit of laughter so boisterous, so prolonged, that the girl, with lustrous eyes grown deep and large with very astonishment, stood like one spell-bound.

"I'll be" — (the reader can imagine what he said). The child heard worse profanity every day of her life. It did not shock her, she was so used to it.

"I—I heard something about this," the man muttered, the tears born of excess of mirth still standing on his cheeks. "O Lord! that miserable rabble—the music! Great Scott! and she with her sensitive ears and high-breeding—the palace and the gutter shaking hands! Well, by all that's great and good, tell me what the women will be doing next! The daughter of a banker too—O Lord, Lord!"

"She's very nice, sir. She's beautiful—she's splendid!" said the girl, loyal and unafraid, her eyes glowing like flames of fire. "She helps the poor; she gives money to the suffering! We didn't know anything till she came to Paradise Flats, just to see how we lived. Now everybody goes to her; and she tells them just what to do, and teaches them to be good. Yes, she *is* an angel!" she reiterated, with burning cheeks and flaming eyes. At that moment the soul shone out, and Nan was beautiful.

The professor looked at her gravely.

"I knew Miss Molly before you were born, child," he said, all traces of mirth gone, and in his eyes there was a soft glow; "and with you I say"—he bowed reverently—"God bless her!"

"How hard I will try to pay *everything* back," said the child with a glad voice. "My father never would get in debt—but," and she drew a long breath, "such a debt as that!"

"Well, you shall try, my child. It's going to

be hard work, — the technique, the positions ; but you have that which money cannot buy — that which you say comes to you. It comes to all God's gifted children. You must give a little time twice a week. I will teach you."

"You, sir ! will you ?" and she placed both hands on her heart. "Oh, how hard I will work !"

"Then come just about this time," said the professor, "if it's not too late."

"Late ! Oh, sir !" said this worldly child, "I'm often out till ten, playing till I earn enough to get my supper."

"We'll see about the supper," he said gravely. "Ten is too late for a child like you. When you are ever out at that time again, it shall be, God willing, before a grand orchestra. Take care of your violin ; it is worth a good many hundred dollars, so cherish it as the apple of your eye. I cannot quite determine its age, that and the name of the maker are so covered with the marks of time ; but I will find out some day. Who knows but it will make your fortune ?

"Give me your name. Gartia — a name to be found in the annals of Italian music. Paradise Flat — umph ! umph ! Miss Stanley is in Paradise ! Yes ; wherever she is, it is Paradise," he said gravely. "And when next I see the Salvation Army, with its hideous harmonies, I will" — he lifted his cap impressively — "take off my hat to it, upon my soul, I will !

"As for those Flats — I know ; it's one of those great manholes where people are caught like mice in a trap, and crushed to death or burnt to cinders, if anything happens. Colonel T—— built them, and may God have mercy on his soul ; I wouldn't. His daughter is one of my best pupils, with a five-hundred dollar violin, and a one-dollar talent," he added grimly in an undertone. "Pillars of the church too. Rot !" he went on, with a satanic expression.

"Now hasten, little one ; if I give lessons you must practise day and night, night and day. I'm a very fiend in my requirements."

"I will try very hard, sir," she said, thinking dubiously of the crowded tenement house, her means of earning a precarious living, the coarse jibes born of envy of those with whom she dared not associate.

"And if you are in difficulty about understanding musical matters, you are to come to me. Do you hear ?"

Did she not hear ?

"And don't you let go of that instrument. Some connoisseurs may fancy it, and offer you a big sum. Don't you let it go for a thousand dollars, remember. One of these days I'll get it done up, when I can find any one with brains enough to do it, and you have learned sufficiently well to handle it."

"And some time, maybe, I can pay you back," she said, smiling, all Italia in her eyes.

“Tut, tut — I didn’t want pay from you. I make the rich pay *me*, but genius *I* pay ;” and he laughed mellowly. “Tell Miss Stanley it’s all right. I’ll see her. I won’t take a penny, not a penny. Only once in a hundred years, maybe, we come across a case like that,” he said after she had gone, as he walked the floor, and rubbed his hands with much inward satisfaction. “Only once in a hundred years ! Not a penny — not one !”

CHAPTER XX

A STURDY UNBELIEVER

*With honor while they heard him tell
His strange, strange story.*

NAN went straight home, and up-stairs to Miss Stanley's room. She found her best friend looking languid, suffering with a slight headache.

"O Miss Molly, don't get sick, don't get sick and die!" the girl exclaimed in a very agony of apprehension.

Molly laughed. "My dear, it's nothing dangerous," she said. "At home I suffered much more than I do now. I had nothing to do, you see."

Then Nan went into the merits of the case. She described the professor as if he had been under a flashlight, and gave Molly all the details of the interview.

"And now I must practise, you see ; so what am I going to do? There's the daily bread."

"I've been thinking that out," said Molly ; "and this is what I propose. My meals are sent in ; but I have my own dishes, and as much as I love work, I hate washing dishes. Now, as there is plenty of food for two, I propose that you help me eat my meals, and wash the dishes to pay for it."

"O Miss Molly, how good you are!" faltered the child.

"Yes; good to myself," laughed Molly. "I don't like you to go on the streets in all weathers; and if the professor has taken you in hand, he will be very exacting. I can leave the key of my room with you when I go out; and you may practise here, out of hearing. At other times, why you must catch your opportunities."

How she caught the opportunities afterward was due to the quick wit of the little Irishwoman.

"Go to the top of the house, deary; it lets out by a ladder, and that's the place in the blessed summer-time. Take airly in the morning, mavourneen. Sure, it's no one could stop you there savin' the wind or the storm."

When Nan had gone, Molly lay down on the lounge to rest. Did she miss her cool, dark room? the loving care of her maid? the hearty condolence of her father? the scents of sweet flowers and odorous perfumes?

Yes, often, particularly when she was sick; but she missed them in her own sweet way, and took up the daily details of her present condition as crosses that must come into the life of every worker in His cause, as making her a sharer in the sorrows of the world, a more earnest co-worker in His vineyard. Spurn her ideas as chimerical if you will. Her pure woman's soul was in earnest, terribly in earnest. She worked with those who,

bowed under the iron bonds of daily routine, were hindered hand and foot. She knew what it meant when the voices of her comrades joined in the words, —

“Help for the perishing.”

They were all round her, held fast, often chained down, by the trammels of guilt, as well as poverty.

“And yet,” she said sometimes, “if God is all love, he is in every soul that suffers, good and bad, high and low; but in my world they try to turn him out, while these poor hearts of toil and ignorance give him boisterous but well-meant welcome as soon as they understand. Let the Church wear its robes of velvet; it is well, perhaps, even though they shut out the poor. We will take possession of his suffering people, in the name and by the Army of the Lord. But ” — she always ended — “I would so like to see papa!”

Ensign Harry came in very much flushed.

“O Molly, dearest!” she said with a sigh and a sob, “he saw me — saw me just as I am, poke bonnet and all. It was this morning in the street. He was alone, and he followed. A higher strength upheld me. It seemed to me that I triumphed in the fact that he had to tramp down these wretched streets, and listen to the music of the Salvation Army. And, dear, he followed us to the hall where we held an experience meeting, and came in and sat down. How could I but look at him? And it was my turn to give out the hymns, and

it was all I could do to keep my voice steady ; but I did ! I did ! When I sat down his profile was towards me ; and oh, my dear, I studied it, and felt a little comforted. You are right — I fear he is weak — that I should have looked for bread and received a stone instead. But oh, my poor, weak heart ! It did beat so !

“Well, Molly, listen ; I have still something more to tell. Most of our people felt proud to see a real minister in our midst. I suppose they looked for something from him, some words of appreciation or comfort ; but he sat there, stock still. I know he was only waiting for the meeting to close.

“Then somebody rose at the back of the house, a workingman by his clothes, but ah, such a noble, beautiful, strong face ! and he began to talk — what do you think ?”

“I’m sure I can’t tell,” said Molly, changing the position of her pillow. “Go on — no, you don’t tire, you amuse and rest me,” she said at Ensign Harry’s deprecating gesture.

“Atheism !” exclaimed Ensign Harry, with a look of horror. “Oh, dear, yes ! but he declared himself a seeker after truth in a fearfully honest and sincere fashion. He said he had been an observer of all religions, and told his experiences with, and disgust at, them all ; but said he was perfectly willing to be set right — in fact, that was why he had come into the meeting. He wanted light.

“Now I expected great things. I felt instinctively that George Flagler, with his experience and knowledge of the Bible, would rise at once, and attempt to enlighten this good-looking stranger; but what occurred? He sat quite still, with an amused look in his face that made me almost detest him. Why, everybody thought he would answer; and so there was silence for a time. Then one of our lieutenants spoke of the distinguished stranger present,—bless you, not one of them connected his visit with me, for no word or look of recognition had passed between us,—and hoped he would say a few words in defence of the belief so dear to us all; but the man only shook his head, and in the politest, most ceremonious manner, declined.

“Then, Molly, I felt a glowing shame and indignation; and presently Hugh King, you know him, our best speaker, rose, and I suppose did the best he could, but I tell you candidly his arguments sounded tame. The fact is, they were all handicapped by the presence of this ‘distinguished’ stranger. For my part, I could not stay; so I slipped out, and came home. Judge of my surprise when I saw this same atheist going up-stairs here at Paradise Flats. I could not resist the impulse to speak to him, and he was so polite and gentlemanly that my heart warmed towards him. He said he had heard of us both, you and me, that he was just from over the water, and that made

me feel acquainted at once. As for George Flagler," — she paused a moment, various emotions visible in her countenance, — "the idol has fallen, and become a very common man of clay. But, indeed, Molly, we must try to help this stranger; we must, indeed! He is a seeker after truth; and then — I think his face will please you. It is a fine English face. I venture to predict that he will be a great acquisition to our little receptions."

"I hope so," said Molly. She was thinking just then of her father and of Lucy.

"So Mr. Flagler did not get a chance to speak to you?" she said.

"No; and I didn't mean he should. What does he want to follow me for? to explain his reasons for marrying another woman? He had no business in the meeting; perhaps it furnished him a little amusement. Even if it did, he must have seen how earnest we were, how anxious to make every word tell. No, let him stay with his rich wife, he — the weaver's son. She is welcome to him. My eyes are opened now. She is welcome;" and her lip curled a little. At the same time there were tears in her eyes.

Duty was now her master, her ideal of everything connected with the Army.

Never before had she been so zealous. Only yesterday she had discovered a case of typhoid fever. Mrs. Ryder, the tailoress, had been sick for a week, and no one knew it. Ensign Harry went

to work, brought a doctor from the Army, and a benevolent nursing sister, took up a contribution, and established a night-watch. Sanitary rules were put in force, good cooking and attendance followed.

She had found two children in a deserted tenement house. Mother dead ; father worse — drunk. The children were dying of starvation, pale, sick, and emaciated. There was no rest for her till, after consultation with the League, an association formed within the Army, the children were placed in clean beds in a children's hospital. The father's condition was inquired into, and his conversion from the love of strong drink attempted.

And so, day after day, such cases were hunted out ; and no effort was too great, no case too revolting, to enlist her sympathy and personal supervision.

CHAPTER XXI

THE FACE ON CANVAS

*Once more the old familiar scenes
Give pleasure to the eye.*

MOLLY had bought some pretty toys for little Sebastian. First she shook a rattle, and then made the tin trumpet squeak. Then she bounced a ball, and then caught the baby up and almost smothered him with kisses.

"He's the beauty of all the world!" she said, laughing and hugging him. "I give you credit, Reine, for keeping him as sweet as a peach. You make a splendid little mother! Now, who is this child's grandmother?" and she looked at Reine with searching eyes.

"My mother is in heaven," said Reine.

"Do you know anything about your husband's family?" Molly asked. "This child ought to have a large circle of relations, and a rich godfather or godmother. What delicate coloring! what spirited features! Who are his grandparents on his father's side?"

"They are all in England, if he has any," Reine replied. "Sebastian never will talk; oh, no, never

with me, nor with any one, about his family ; but sometimes, when he is not quite himself, he talks of lords and ladies and great people as if they were his daily companions. I wish you could see him then — but no — I don't. It would make you so sorry."

"Then you don't know whether he has a mother or father living?"

The little woman shook her head. "No ; if I ask him, he turns the talk to something else. I think he has been used to fine surroundings and great ladies and elegant homes, for sometimes he almost persuades me that we are living in some old castle. But he has begun to paint."

She went to the closet, and lifted a small canvas already glorified by the touch of genius.

"Sometimes I'm half sorry when he gets working," she said ; "for it seems to make him gloomy. His good spirits are gone, and he don't stick to it. You see, everything is against him, — the light, the materials ; and he grinds his paints on bits of stone and old papers. Poor Sebastian !" and she sighed from her heart. "I wonder whom he left behind him in Old England ? Oh, but I forgot to show you the picture he finished ! It is Baby !" and she held up the panel upon which the lovely face of the younger Sebastian shone out from a cloud, as the face of an angel glorified.

"Oh, I must have that picture !" cried Molly ; "what will he sell it for ?"

"You will think it too much," said Reine, turning her still charming little head now this way, now that, tenderly, like a mother bird, and viewing the picture at all points.

"What! has he set a price on it?" asked Molly.

"Would you think fifteen dollars too much?" asked Reine, "for *you*?"

"Too much! Why, I have given twice that for a pretty frame!" said Molly eagerly. "Too much! why, I will give twice that at once," and she counted out the money.

On the following day the banker received the picture accompanied by a note:—

DEAR FATHER [it read], — Enclosed please find a likeness of Sebastian, a little child born in a cellar. If it can be matched in any aristocratic home, I should like you to find me the picture. I ask as a special favor that you will frame it, and hang it up in what used to be my room. The man who painted it is the child's father, and you can see for yourself that he knows how to handle the brush. But he is degraded from his manhood through his vicious habit of drinking. He keeps sober for a week at a time, then comes the temptation and the fall. But even when quite under the influence of liquor he is kind and good to his wife, and imagines himself amidst the most splendid surroundings. I never read or heard of a like case; but we are helping that, and, as the habit is not quite as masterful as it was, we may possibly, through his charming child, bring him to his senses. Dear father, I am very happy in my work. It is much better than to sit in our beautiful parlors and sing, "*Rescue the perishing.*" Somebody has got to do the rescuing; why not I, when my heart is in it? But I do confess to you that I long

to see you. Dear father, let me come to you sometimes. It need not be till after dark, and I will be as conventional as I can. At all events, you shall not be troubled with the poke bonnet. Can I come? Say yes, like the good father you are, and then I will tell you all about it. I promise you I will never trouble you in the daytime.

Your letter was a delightful surprise, short as it was. Oh, the romance of the annals of the poor! I have something to tell you concerning the lecture of your English celebrity, Rev. Mr. Flagler. You wouldn't think to see the little lady I was with that night that she had anything in common with him; and yet she was engaged to be married to him — not so many years ago. But somebody is coming, I must close my brief note. Good-day, dear, *dear* father.

From your MOLLY.

This letter found the banker in his usual lounging-place.

"Bless her heart!" he muttered, with moist eyes. "I was a brute to send her away; but conditions are conditions, and I must hold her to her word. But to allow her to come here some evening when I am alone — why, it would be a treat to look into her sweet eyes for five minutes. And if she married and went to Africa — why, then I might never see her again. I suppose if she does marry she will gravitate to India, or Africa, or China, or Japan. Talk of the heathen Chinese!" he muttered, as he applied his pearl-handled pen-knife — her gift the very last Christmas — to cutting the strings in which the picture was bound; "they're ages ahead of us in some things," he laughed softly, "particularly in China, where I've

heard they drown most of their girl-babies, thereby saving themselves a good deal of trouble in the future."

Another moment and Lucy tripped in, very fair in her white draperies, her eyes shining, her cheeks glowing, truly a beautiful creature.

"Oh, what a lovely, lovely face!" she cried, as the picture came out of its wraps. "Oh, what a heavenly face! Whose child is it? I never saw so beautiful a creature!"

"Molly writes me that it is one of her poor brats born in a cellar. Its father is an artist in his better moments, and in one of them painted that."

"Oh!" and she surveyed it with languid interest, the information imparted serving to cool her raptures; "but then, isn't it really beautiful? It must be flattered; of course it is. Molly wouldn't say that. It might answer for a fancy picture. What are you going to do with it?"

"Have it framed, and put in the room that used to be hers," he replied with sarcastic emphasis.

"Oh, well, it may be hers again before very long. I have had an offer, Uncle George."

"An offer!" he stared incredulously. His thoughts flew to a young officer who had often been her escort, a man who had nothing but his pay, with whom Lucy had seemed very much infatuated. She might have to rough it if she married him, and she was not the girl to do that.

"Yes, uncle dear; an offer from Mr. Philip Maybury."

"Oh!" he drew a long breath. "A man old enough to be your grandfather! Well, I wish you joy. Of course you accepted him. He's enormously rich."

"Oh, yes; I accepted him," she made reply in a matter-of-fact way. "We are going abroad for our wedding trip—a consummation that I have longed for, but never dreamed I should have the money to afford."

"I'll be hanged if I don't believe you're selling yourself," her uncle said with almost brutal abruptness. "What does your father say?"

"Father doesn't know it; but I imagine he will be glad, and I know the boys will. Of course I shall bring them all handsome presents, and I hope the dear old man will be generous."

"Clings to a dime closer than I would to a thousand dollars. You had better bargain for your pocket-money beforehand," said her uncle coolly. "He has a grandchild as old as you are, who hopes, I dare say, to inherit all his money. Poor devil! I rather pity him when he knows how it stands."

"He must take things as they come," said Lucy; and wheeling about, her thoughts full of the fancied grandeur of her future position, she left the room.

"A sacrifice on both sides," muttered the

banker. "Lucy to her vanity and love of ease — Molly to her queer ideas of duty ; but on the whole, I don't know but I would rather take Molly's chances. She'll come to her senses sooner."

The picture was hung. It seemed to shed a halo over the delicately tinted wall ; and the banker, who had never before taken any special interest in any painting, stole in sometimes, when the room was open, to look at it.

Was it possible that children as fair as that grew into street arabs, dirty venders of newspapers, and even hapless, hopeless thieves ? The question troubled him a little for the first time in his life. It troubled him once again when the eloquent rector of St. Paul's gave out for his text on the following Sunday :—

"Am I my brother's keeper ?" and proved that he was.

He had not answered Molly's letter yet. That night he wrote her specifying the time, even the hour, on a certain night when Lucy was engaged for some fashionable party, and he wanted his child to himself.

When she left him it was August ; now it was April, and in all that time he had only seen her once. How his heart hungered to hear her voice ; his ear was alive to the slightest sound. When he heard her step he could not keep his emotion down, and in another moment she was in his arms.

"Dearest, dearest!" was all she could say, and he could say nothing.

"How bright everything looks! My cousin must be a good housekeeper," was her first comment, as she moved from one familiar place to another.

"Your cousin is a blanked humbug," was his reply. "I've had a housekeeper for three months."

"Why, papa! and I never knew it."

"How should you, when you chose to desert me and set up your own housekeeping? Sit down, young lady, where I can see you."

She obeyed him, and he looked her critically over.

"I don't notice that you've lost any flesh," he said.

"Oh, no! I weigh more than I did when I left here," she answered in a quiet manner, no restraint in her voice. "My work agrees with me, though at times it is very trying. We are doing a great deal of good, papa."

"I suppose you are sure of what you assert?" her father replied. "I am not a religious man; some would call me non-religious. I don't remember that I ever felt very acutely for the woes of others. Whenever I have let my heart run away with me, I have simply made enemies. I lent John McGruder ten thousand dollars to help him along once — I don't believe I have a more bitter enemy in the world than that same John. I tell

you, if you warm the frozen viper, he'll turn and strike you."

"But all men are not vipers," said Molly. "I grant that in your world, and in your business, which are both as distinct from the world of the laboring poor as two classes can be, you may find people who are all the time fighting for the top-most round, who envy and hate all who are above them; but among the miserable denizens of the other under-world I have found gratitude, probity, honor, and charity. You have no idea how willing they are to help each other — how they give half of their little all, and sometimes the whole, to those who are worse off than themselves. I have seen even little children do this, and it makes me honor the poor. The rich are so often idle and luxurious — yes, and envious. The finer qualities are not half so inherent in your world, papa, as in mine."

"They are, doubtless, confined to the slums," was the sarcastic rejoinder.

"I never was so happy in my life," said Molly with enthusiasm, as she leaned back in the easy-chair.

"Thank you, my dear," her father said, with a profound bow.

"Because, you see," she said intensely, "I have all my time occupied. At home — well, everything is delightful here, but then I had hours and hours of idleness. Suppose I made calls, the talk

was vapid, the thing was a *quid pro quo*. You knew that the call would be returned with just so much ceremony. Suppose I went shopping, there were the same counters, the same faces, the same goods ; and it was so with parties, receptions, balls, over and over, round and round,—no new faces, houses just like ours, men we knew, women we knew, children we knew ; and even in church there was always that deplorable sameness. I don't mean in the service ; I love that.

“But now scarcely a day that we do not find some new need, want, penitent — somebody hungering for a word of sympathy ; somebody dying for a little appreciation ; somebody hiding a talent because he has neither money nor kindly words of help. The wretched are relieved, the miserable are encouraged. Oh, it would do you good to see the faces of the wretched light into smiles ! And they try so hard — oh, how they do struggle ! The only sorrow I have in the world is being parted from you. But then I can think of you and bless you. I can place you here in this dear old room, know just where you sit, what you are doing, almost always after business hours. When did you hear last from Russell Stacey ?” she asked, the enthusiasm falling out of her voice.

“Haven't heard a word from him for a month. Shouldn't wonder if he found it worth his while to stay abroad,” was the answer. “Maybe he has

gone into slum-work in London. There's plenty of it."

"No; it isn't in him," said Molly with some heat; "and yet, what opportunities he will miss! Fancy him a hanger-on of wealth and fashion, when he might make a brilliant record for himself."

"He ought to have been a Salvation Army captain," said the banker, stretching his feet a little. "That would have been glory."

"Indeed it would—true glory! He might at all events practise his profession, even if he has plenty of money, and do some good in the world. *You* are not lazy, papa; but he is,—lazy, handsome, and good-for-nothing. Oh, how I hate such people, and what a record they are making for eternity!"

The banker moved uneasily.

"That seems to be a cardinal feature of your theory."

"Eternity? Why not, since we must live on, whether we would or not?"

"What do you know about it?"

"O papa! don't let's go over the old controversy," said Molly, trembling a little. "Remember, I am here as your visitor for a short time only. You must be *very* polite to me. Where's Lu?"

"Gone to some party. Now, there's a girl to whom such things are beginning, ending, and all.

She's only happy when enjoying the calls and routs of fashion. By the way, she is going to be married."

"Married! — Lu!" There was consternation in her voice.

"Yes; and guess to whom?"

"O dear me, I can't! Why, I had intended her for Russell Stacey. Please tell me who it is."

He told her.

She knew him, — bald, decrepit, miserly, — and held up her hands.

"Poor girl! how I pity her!" she said in tones of commiseration. "She couldn't do worse. He's a cruel old man."

The talk drifted on. Molly found herself describing one of her particularly eccentric companions, — Sebastian; and the banker found himself listening with more interest than he had supposed possible.

"Who is he?" the banker asked.

"Nobody knows. Some six weeks ago a carriage — a handsome carriage — stopped before Paradise Flats. It don't often happen, and of course the inmates were all agog. Presently word came up to me that a lady wished to speak to me, and I invited her up to my room. She came, a slight figure, dressed in deep mourning of the finest texture. I knew at once by her language that she was English, and a lady in language and manner.

"‘I have heard of you,’ she said in a very sweet

voice, 'and am here to inquire after a friend of mine — at least we used to be friends. His name is Bassett, Sebastian Bassett; and I learn that he lives in this house.'

" 'Yes,' I said, 'he does — with his wife and child.'

" 'His — wife! and child!' she repeated; and I could see under the black veil how white she grew. 'Then — he — is — married!'

" 'He has a very sweet little wife,' was my answer, 'and one of the most beautiful children I ever saw.'

"For a little time she was silent, but in that silence I knew there was anguish. I pitied her, yet not knowing why.

" 'And — his — habits' — she still questioned, in a faint voice.

"I told her as carefully as I could, or rather was beginning to tell her, when she broke in upon me, —

" 'Don't say one word about it, unless there is — improvement,' she went on. 'From his boyhood he had a passion for drink, which was fostered and encouraged by the habits of his family. Three times he has reformed — three times he has raised the hopes of those who love him — three times has given us his promise of a thorough reformation, and of a great and prosperous future. At last he left England, — that was four years ago, — saying that he should lose himself in the wilds of

America. But we have hoped against hope, and are still determined to save him if we can. Finally we have traced him to this place. Married! And what kind of a woman is his wife, that she could marry *him*?' her voice faltered.

"‘A very sweet and pretty little woman,’ was my answer; ‘kind to all his moods—not a lady, perhaps, in your sense of the word, or in mine, but still—well—as a woman, far, far above him as a man.’

"‘And still he grovels!’ she said.

"‘There is a change,’ I made reply; ‘it is only occasionally that he indulges now, where it used to occur every night.’

"‘Thank God for that!’ she said unsteadily. ‘And you say the child is very lovely? How old?’

"I told her.

"‘Poor little soul! if he should inherit his father’s failing,’ she half sobbed; and I pitied her the more.

"‘Can’t you save him?’ she asked, making a movement as if to rise.

"‘Save him—I!’ was my astonished exclamation.

"‘I mean, of course, the Army. I have done all I could, God knows! His mother has given him up in despair—and he promised to be such an honor to her. If you could have seen his home! his happy, beautiful boyhood! the genius that

even then made him a wonder and delight ! Can't the Army get hold of him ? I used to despise the movement, to laugh at its military discipline ; but now I can only hope that he may be brought under its influence. Is there any hope that they may help poor Sebastian ?'

"I knew she was crying under her veil.

" 'His mother is alive, then ?' I ventured to say.

" 'Yes, poor lady ; and he is all the child God ever gave her. What terrible spirit possesses him ? It must be something evil — it must be that he is under a spell ! It must be ; it must !'

"Poor soul ! I pitied her ; for beneath her veil I saw her wringing her delicately gloved hands.

" 'And he is married, married !'

"It sounded like a wail.

" 'Is his father alive ?' I asked.

" 'No, thank God ! he died years ago, and the fortune he left his son has all been spent in drink — but I can say nothing more — only — if money is needed — take this ;' and she almost forced a purse into my hand, as she said, 'For many reasons it is better for me not to see him.' Of course I took it ; and she seemed to rely on my discretion, so I have it by me now. But, do you think, papa ! I believe she was a lady of rank."

"And this Sebastian ?" said the banker, quite interested in the story.

"Is the father of that beautiful child whose picture I sent you. But it is ten o'clock. In five

minutes the cab I engaged to take me back will come. Dear father, when shall I see you again?"

"Come — when you will," was the response; and this time he folded her again in his arms and kissed her.

Was it a tear she felt on her cheek?

CHAPTER XXII

JOHN HARDY, PRINTER

*He who wants little
Always has enough.*

WHEN John Hardy, *alias* Stacey, first saw his living-room, a feeling of dismay crept over him.

There were three windows. The floor was black and uneven. Dust was everywhere, but water was plenty. The paint was in an undesirable state, and gave evidence that small and dirty fingers had come into close contact with the wood-work. There was no stove. An ill-smelling fireplace gave show of ashes and charred wood, as if a fire had recently been made therein.

The man took the dimensions of the room. That same day furniture came ; not much, — two easy-chairs, a table, a small bookcase, an art-square of carpet, and window shades. The windows were cleaned, and a student's lamp placed on a bracket.

The man himself worked diligently. He was, above all things else, methodical. A book out of place was torture. His hands did not look like those of a workingman, though he had stained and roughened them. They were delicately shaped

and carefully kept ; except for their darker color, there was no disguising the fact that they were the hands of a gentleman. But there are workmen who are gentlemen through and through, as well as gentlemen, so-called, who are ruffians at heart. When the room was in shape, — a few good books in the bookcase, a guitar, violin, and one or two other instruments placed round, — the man surveyed his work with satisfaction.

“Rather a contrast to the rooms in B—— Hotel,” he said musingly, “but all the more enjoyable. Well, I have made the plunge ; we will see what comes of it. It is a thorough change. I shall miss Jacko. He wouldn’t live here — too high-toned. I rather like it, on the whole. Now I must buy a few nice engravings — not too many — for the wall.”

He went into a smaller room leading from that, and surveyed it with a smile that curved the corners of his lips dubiously. It contained a bedstead, two chairs, a bath-tub shaped like an immense basin, a large stand for pitcher and water, and a rack well stocked with towels.

“A poor man, self-made, pursuing his studies in the intervals of labor,” he said to himself. “It’s a fine idea. I really need to brush up my knowledge of surgery. Who knows how many broken heads I may have to bandage, or broken bones to set? Here is the chance for work in good earnest. No idling now, young man !

"I fancy I did the atheistical *rôle* pretty well. Now they must do the rest. There's no doubt in my own mind," he went on, taking out some medical works to the bookcase mentioned before, "that I am a graceless dog in matters of theology. A doubter by nature, the parsons have helped to make me a doubter by training. But already I have enlisted the sympathy of those sweet feminine souls who flutter about the unregenerate like birds around the dove-cote. A half-way sinner seldom inspires the interest given to one who advances thoughts and theories entirely beyond the pale of their experience. However, I'm willing to let them try all their little arts upon me. It may be I shall be convinced in the end.

"I liked that lieutenant who spoke. He hit right from the shoulder. And there was something angelically real in his religious ardor. I respect him more than I do that effigy of the church who was present. He wasn't a true clergyman, by Jove! or he would never have sat there like a statue, after what I said.

"There is something in the almost fanatic earnestness of these Salvationists that carries one away, absorbs and holds the imagination, makes one wish, in the first place, for truth, and then to be true.

"Their women are not bad-looking, either, if it wasn't for that hideous uniform.

"I wonder who the little lady was I met com-

ing up-stairs? She really talked to me as .. I were one of them—said I must attend their sociables, receptions, *musicales*! Good Lord! *musicales*! Well, they may command me; but won't it be fun! I declare, I never was so interested in my life! She spoke of Molly too, — Molly, with her dainty ways and exquisite abilities, *here!*”

He looked out of the window on to a great well of a yard, so gloomy, so forbidding, that his man's heart sank within him. Half a dozen rough little gamins were playing toss-penny, and swearing round-robins out of sight. Two of them had stacks of newspapers under their arms. Three or four small scraps of humanity in rags cuddled in their arms babies as big as themselves. Three women bent over three tubs, rinsing and rubbing; and at that moment the shrill tones at his left gave evidence of childish quarrels.

“Lucky I am absolutely cosmopolitan in spite of all; that will carry me through.

“There!” he looked around with a sigh of satisfaction.

“I'll be porter for a great commercial house, or a joiner, or a painter — I don't know as it's anybody's business what I am, though; only for form's sake I suppose I must now and then allude to my business. Ah, I have it! I'm a printer! A 'jour'! Benjamin Franklin was a printer; printers have chances for greatness that other callings do not foster. By the way, haven't I a printing-

press somewhere? I might turn it to good account, getting up bills and placards and posters, and enjoy the pleasure of earning money. Good! I had one, but, egad! I think I gave it away. Well, I'll buy me another."

He placed abundance of paper on his desk, on one side envelopes, on the other pens and pencils, three volumes of Charles Lamb's Essays, which were very household gods to him. He was a man who studied, classified, and registered all he read.

Intellectually he was rich, physically of the noblest type of manhood, morally pure, but without aim in life in spite of his profession. This new move stimulated him in all directions, and the concealment of his identity added zest to the opportunities now placed before him.

His chief motive was the desire, the overwhelming desire, to win the heart of the only woman he had ever loved—to win it honestly, thoroughly, and entirely.

And now, having arranged matters somewhat to his satisfaction, neither slouchingly as if he had little interest in them, nor too carefully, betokening primness and over-nicety, he went through the instruments,—banjo, violin, and guitar,—saw that the strings were perfect, and put them aside, trimmed his lamp, and sat down in his second-hand leather-covered easy-chair, monarch of all he surveyed.

"It is a satisfaction only to be near her," he

muttered, lighting a costly cigar ; fortunately the Paradise people had not been educated to know the difference between good and bad in that staple.

He sat and thought and smoked, occasionally uttering his thoughts aloud, as had always been his custom. In the next room Crump the tailor was lecturing his pale-haired lass, while she basted and handed him flaps, linings, and pocket-pieces, and his wife put heavy irons on the stove.

A curious looking man was Crump. His face was pale, his forehead running up like a funnel point, with three tufts of straw-colored hair adorning top and sides. His eyes were blue, eyebrows he had none, his features were broad rather than long. Somehow his name and appearance suited each other. An industrious man, terribly self-willed, never quiet, the wife and child had learned to obey his slightest wish, and listen reverently to all he had to say.

“ ‘N’ I tell you, whichever way you turns, you goes wrong gi’nly, you women-folks,” he was saying. “Fambly,” he called his wife “Family,” “you ain’t put them irons on the right heater ; this is for that, ’n’ that is for this. Here, Mandy, you line this pocket welt, ’n’ hand me that there cord. These pants are for a very pertickler gent — an’ so,” returning to the beginning of his sentence, “you ain’t a-goin’ to git my consent to go to any of them Damnation Army goin’s on.”

"Malvy Britton goes; an' they don't say nothin' 'bout Salvation doin's, on'y sing an' recite 'n' have cakes and lemonade 'n' chocolate," sniffed the girl.

"I tell you, you ain't goin' to have anything to do with them Damnation Army doin's," shouted the irate Crump; "so you shet up, 'n' hand me that band linin' over there; 'n' Fambly, git my press-board, 'n' git it quick."

Poor little Mandy had received an invitation to the next sociable from the hands of Nan, as the girl passed Crump's door, violin-bag in hand, having just returned from taking her lesson.

"I do hope you'll go, Mandy," said the child, her great glowing eyes scintillating in the dark passage-way; "for I'm to play to-night, and there's goin' to be singin', and lots of recitations, and Miss Cap'n Molly — oh, she's so sweet! You'll love her jest to look at her!"

Mandy hoped so too, and tremblingly asked her father; she never thought of speaking to her mother about such matters — the result we know.

Then Nan went on round the passage-way, and timidly knocked at the stranger's door.

At his "Come in," she entered, gave a swift, surprised glance at the room, "so neat for a man," she afterwards said, and delivered her message.

"Miss Molly Stanley's compliments to Mr. Hardy, and wouldn't he come to the *musicale* to be held at her rooms to-night?"

John Hardy took his cigar from between his lips, and sat upright looking at the child, saying to himself, "They lose no time."

"Why, I've seen you before!" he unthinkingly exclaimed.

"Maybe you have; for I played a long time on the street to earn money for my sick father," she said, shifting her light burden to the other hand.

"Oh, yes! I remember," he made answer, catching himself up. "You have a very nice violin — left you by your father."

Her face lighted.

"Did you know *him*?" she asked. "He called it King Solomon."

"Oh, no! but I have a faint recollection that you told me about it somewhere — sometime," he said guardedly. "I have rather a nice old fiddle myself," he went on, stretching out his hand to where the instrument hung, "but not half as good as yours."

He drew his bow across the strings with the swiftness and precision of a first-class amateur.

"Ah! you play also," the girl said, laughing out joyously.

"Why, some little. I have studied a bit with Andromo here, and one or two professors abroad."

"Professor Andromo! oh, he is teaching *me*!" said the waif, and her dark eyes glowed again.

At which information the blue spectacles stared in undisguised astonishment.

“Andromo! *your* teacher!” he said, taken by surprise. “Andromo and Paradise Flats! By Jove!”

The sarcasm was unmistakable.

“Paradise Flats seems good enough for you to live in!” Nan retorted, her quick Italian temper flashing out of the glorious eyes. She had to learn day by day that there were two worlds grinding against each other, and that she inhabited the under one.

“I sincerely beg your pardon,” he said in his softest tones. “Yes, I live in Paradise Flats myself; being only a poor printer, it’s the best I can do at present,” he said. “But knowing the professor pretty well, and that he is very eminent as a musician, and knowing by experience the prices he asks — great Heaven! his charges are enormous! whew!”

“Yes, I know,” said Nanny, readily pacified; “but Miss Molly attended to all that — of course I couldn’t pay. But I will! You better believe I will when I get famous! Oh, yes! I’m goin’ to be. The professor says so. But Miss Molly, she’s an angel, she is. All the tenement folks say so! She gives bea-u-ti-ful receptions, and finds out what everybody can do best. She’s an angel!”

The man’s face, as the child, with all the eloquence of deep feeling, sounded the praises of the woman he loved, was a study. He watched the

glowing face, the shining eyes, the trembling lips, with a kind of ecstasy.

All regrets over lost opportunities, all desires of appreciation, were merged in one delightful, overwhelming sensation, — that even if he loved in vain, it was more than any mortal honor, more and greater, to love such a woman.

So simple, so gracious, so beautiful a life — could he question her choice, or seek to lead her away from the work of her life?

“No, by Heaven! I’ll work with her to the death, nor think of marriage, if she only will love me,” he said to himself; then aloud, —

“I will come to the reception to-night. If you see Miss Stanley, tell her I shall be very happy to come.”

CHAPTER XXIII

MOLLY AND MANDY

And light and flowers and beauty all assist.

"THERE, Miss Stanley, I think we are ready now," said Ensign Harry.

"How sweet the room looks ! Who would ever have thought of flowers — indeed, who could get such expensive things but you ?"

Feathery lengths of wistaria, lush red roses, clusters of violets, great bunches of pink and scarlet and white geraniums, rare hothouse flowers placed here and there on brackets, in vases, sent their subtle perfume in all directions, and added to the simple accessories of the room a radiance, a delicacy of color and arrangement, that seemed to emanate from gracious occupants of Fairyland. Everything that Molly's fingers touched turned to beauty.

It was true that she was the moving spirit and good genius of the house. The soul-beauty of her face, her graceful carriage, her quickness of perception, were beyond words to praise ; and since her life had been devoted to duty and filled with work, and her spirits wakened to the needs of the

perishing, all those charms had increased tenfold. There was nothing quixotic about her. She never talked of reforming the world, only of her own way of lifting humanity higher, — of making here and there a struggling soul happier; of teaching the unthinking to think; of bringing to the daylight now and then some talent hidden under a bushel. She did not expect, neither did she undertake, great things, — a sewing-school for poor children, books to lend, simple amusements; she taught that work was ennobling, that vanity brought ruin, that in the humblest heart there was room for noble deeds.

“I think I’ll put this one long spray of wistaria around the sea-picture,” said Ensign Harry. “It needs nothing to make it more beautiful; but, as the most beautiful picture in the room, I’ll crown it,” and she placed the flowers there.

Ensign Harry looked very dainty in her blue print dress, — blue of so delicate a tint that the little white collar about the throat only seemed a shading off to the softer tints of the round throat. It was plainly made, and fitted her to perfection. This little English woman was an adept in colors, shapes, and styles, could make dresses, bonnets, even gloves. Molly also appeared in a print dress; but it was the softest, sweetest shade of salmon pink that could be found in the market. She also wore white in neck and sleeves as a relief; but it was rare old lace, — the only luxury she

allowed herself on these gala evenings. The lace was so fine and white that its proximity to the print was in no wise inharmonious. It only enhanced its wearer's beauty, — beauty like that of the wild-rose, ethereal, but manifest.

"The rooms do look well, for Paradise Flats," said Molly; "but when I reflect with what scanty graces Reine makes her cellar-room habitable, I am almost ashamed of these."

"Her husband earns money enough to live upstairs," said Ensign Harry, "or ought to."

"He *could* earn money enough to live in a good house of his own," was Molly's response, "but he has lost his manhood."

"Have *you* given him up?" was the ensign's anxious question.

"Yes," Molly answered with reluctance; "unless something unforeseen should happen — some terrible accident or death. Pray God he may die sober at least!"

"Poor little Mandy Crump!" Ensign Harry said after a brief silence. "I met her in the hall. She said her father wouldn't let her come, then burst out crying as if her heart would break."

"I'm going to order a suit of clothes," said Molly, going to her writing-desk.

"A suit — of clothes! — you! for yourself?" and Ensign Harry looked bewildered.

"No; but I am determined to soften that heart of adamant. I am determined that Mandy shall

come to-night. Poor child, she has so little pleasure!" and she wrote: —

DEAR MR. CRUMP, — I have a friend who needs a new suit of clothes. He is ill and poor, and I shall have the pleasure of paying for it. If I give you his measure, will you undertake to make it? As soon as it is done, you shall be liberally paid.

Please let Mandy come to-night.

M. STANLEY.

Molly read the missive aloud. Her cheeks were as red as La France roses, and the battle-light of determination brightened her eyes.

"It's for Jennings, the carpenter," she said.

Ensign Harry looked preternaturally demure, then smiled, then laughed. Then, at Molly's look of surprise, she laughed louder. Finally she sank, shaking, into a chair.

"What in the world" — ejaculated Molly.

"The — whole thing is — so ridiculous! so exquisitely funny!" was the half-smothered answer. "The poor carpenter is sick — typhoid fever — may not live to wear a suit of clothes — and you ordering them — and of Crump! Oh! oh! oh!"

"If he don't live to wear them, somebody will," said Molly, quite alive to the absurdity of the situation, but more alive to her generous impulses.

"And he'll charge you a monstrous price, if you don't limit him."

"Why, I shall limit him, of course. Besides, I'm bound to emancipate Mandy."

"Molly, you are a saint. If I were a man, I should simply adore you," exclaimed Ensign Harry. "Where are your lovers? You should have had them by the score. I'm glad I ever knew you!" and she wiped the impulsive tears, born of her mirth, from her eyes. "You stoop to us, you love us, you master us! I write home about you in all my letters. I only wish you were at the head of the Army. I am not always sure when I am obeying orders without asking questions, whether I ought or not, though I must; but in you I have such perfect faith that I should never question. How shall we get the note upstairs? I'll carry it." And she did.

Crump read the letter. First he smiled, and then he frowned. Then he fidgeted, and told Family.

She, fearing she should betray too much joy, pulled her face to its usual sanctimonious length. A red dress, a green sash, and her own old white slippers were all dancing a jig in her bewildered brain. That was all the finery poor Mandy possessed.

Family held the candle over her lord's head in frightful proximity to the bunch of yellow furze that served as a topknot, and read the note; then she smiled as he cogitated over the *pros* and *cons*.

"You're a-goin' to let 'er go, ain't ye, Crump?" she asked, sidling away with the candle.

"No, I ain't," Crump said shortly.

The woman set the candle down with a faint cry.

"Lord o' mercy, Crump, you're a-treading on your own toes."

"Call Mandy here," growled Crump, on second thoughts. "They sha'n't drag *me* into their net."

The girl made her appearance from the closet beyond, where she had heard every word. She came forward trembling with fear, yet inwardly hoping. To her the promised entertainment was like a glimpse of heaven to the world-weary pilgrim. She seldom went beyond the snarl in Crump's voice.

"Mandy, there's seven flaps to make, stitching back-handed."

"Yes, sir," said Mandy meekly.

"Five pockets to set in, and four breasts to line."

"Yes, sir," was the subdued and stereotyped answer.

"Ten buttonholes to make."

"Yes, sir."

"And all to be done to-morrow. If I let you go to this Damnation party" — with tremendous emphasis.

"I'll do it if I die," said Mandy, trembling; "I'll git up at half-past four."

"Well, I dunno as I've got any say about it," he muttered ferociously; "ask Fambly."

Family said, "Lor', yes; what's to hinder? There's my white shoes!"

And so Mandy presented herself to Molly in a white frock, clean and neat, the red one with the green sash having been dispensed with after due consideration. "And really," Molly thought, as she welcomed the hopeful, happy face, "she's not so very bad-looking."

One after another the knocks at the door were answered, and the rooms slowly filled. There were coarse people, homely people, nervous people, all dressed in their best. There was a sprinkling of young girls, a few members of the Army with their instruments; but among them all no sweeter face met the eye than that of little old Mrs. McKiseth, who came down to "hear her darlin' play," and brightened the little circle by her shrewdness and native Irish wit.

Last of all came Stacey, introduced as John Hardy. Ensign Harry made a mute sign to Molly that here was *the* man! The man moved quietly and meekly forward, knowing no one, and making for the ensign, who introduced him to Miss Stanley, whose quick eye almost noted his effort *not* to be graceful.

"A handsome man," she said at the first glance. "A very handsome man," at the second — "not exactly a laborer."

"Oh! you are a printer," she said some little time afterward, as he informed her of the fact; "that settles it," she added naively.

"May I ask what is settled?" he questioned.

"Excuse me, I have been trying to think whether I have seen you before," she made frank reply ; "but among all the new friends I have made the last year, I do not know of one who follows the craft you mention. I have always thought that printing was one of the noblest of callings. It must tend to keep the finer faculties of the mind wide awake, to nourish the root of knowledge. On what paper are you specially engaged ?"

He blushed like a boy.

"On no particular paper, Miss — Miss" —

"Stanley," put in Molly promptly.

"Yes, thank you. My work is desultory — by the job — books, bills, cards — for samples see catalogue," and he laughed. Under the dark-blue glasses there was a queer little twinkle ; but, faithful to their trust, the spectacles hid it.

"Strange how he interests me," thought Molly ; "and yet the man is an atheist, a confessed unbeliever. A godless man, who stands alone, able, professionally, to live in himself, by himself, for himself only. I ought to shudder to be talking with him, and still he fascinates me with that bold self-assertion. He holds my glance. What beautiful eyes he has under those horrid glasses ! I suppose he has to wear them. No doubt he is a man who reads and thinks much, a self-made man. His hands are nice too. A printer ought to have nice hands."

At that moment little Mrs. McKisseth came in, followed by her pet cat.

Stacey started.

"What a beautiful creature!" Stacey exclaimed, as the cat brushed by him. "She reminds me of my J —, of a cat," he added tamely, his face aflame.

"Then, you like cats," Molly said.

"Oh, immensely!" was his answer; and he bit his lip viciously, "— er — particularly when they talk," he added.

"When they *talk*!"

"Well — er — seem to, you know — with such an expressive purr. I assure you, I can interpret mine — I mean cats generally. Of course you like them," he blundered on.

"Yes," she laughed. "You remind me of a — friend I once had. He owned a cat he called Jacko, and upon my word the wonderful stories he told of that cat were quite beyond belief. But he believed them, or rather he believed in the cat. I have always wanted to see that cat," she went on, *sotto voce*. "If not a wonder, it must have been a beauty."

"Yes, it — it must have been," faltered Stacey, feeling unsafe even under his disguise if she talked much longer.

Fortunately some one called for music.

"Excuse me," said Molly, with a vivacious little nod, "we devote some time to singing and playing. Do you sing?"

"Not guilty," he replied with a shrug. "I play the fiddle sometimes."

"We are just going to give a little concerto movement for violin and piano, and you must tell me your opinion of our young violinist. Professor Andromo is going to be very proud of her ;" and Molly went toward the piano, secure in the conviction that she had stunned him by the assertion that an inmate of Paradise Flats commanded the services of so great a musician as the professor.

Everybody listened. That was one of the rules ; and the playing was effective, — so much so that a prolonged applause brought the two out again.

Then some one, a stout young fellow, an officer in the Army by his uniform, played a cornet solo in creditable style. This was followed by two or three clever recitations ; and then Mandy, who was in the seventh heaven of ecstasy, wondered whether ten o'clock would come before she could taste of the refreshments laid out on a corner table.

There were sandwiches and pretty little sugar cakes, cheese and crackers, and tea and chocolate. Somebody said "lemonade," near her ; and sure enough, there stood a pitcher — it must have held a gallon — full to the brim ! Everything she had seen and heard had filled her with supreme content. She had never been to a theatre or concert in her life — a children's party, perhaps, once a year, but that was the extent of her social merry-making ; and the child had a soul that could feel

and appreciate such gatherings to a certain extent. Her eyes followed Molly; and presently she heard a voice near her say, —

“What two handsome ones them two are!”

Molly and John Hardy had gravitated together again.

She had asked some questions which he had answered or parried, and he was telling her of his wishes and expectations.

“At present,” he said, and if it had not been for the spectacles Molly might well have questioned the expression of his eyes, “I am at work all my spare time studying medicine. My ambition is to become a surgeon.”

“The noblest profession a man could choose,” she said, her eyes sparkling. “I had a friend — nay, I *have* a friend,” and the words sent a thrill to his heart, — “Why in the deuce,” he said to himself, “if she doesn’t care for Stacey that way, does she mention him so often?” — “who,” continued Molly, “with the grandest privileges a man can possess, a good knowledge of surgery, rich, young, yet lives the life of a sybarite, caring for nothing, for no one, but himself. Oh, I despise such living, such a character! But then, how can you be a surgeon, and absolutely certain that there is no God?”

He was taken all aback. The sad, sweet pathos of her voice nearly unmanned him. He stood before her self-convicted and despising himself.

"I did say that rash thing — and you heard?" he asked.

"Oh, yes! I didn't go out that day, but Ensign Harry brings me minutes of all the meetings. How came you to be there?" she asked naively. "Did you not know theology is never discussed among us? We work and we talk — we work for bodies, and talk for souls."

"I had tried everything else," he said. "My people were very strict. I was brought up to believe in many things that I could not help questioning. But we will leave that for future argument," he added, smiling.

"And you — will you not contribute something towards the entertainment?" she asked, instantly relapsing into her accustomed dignity.

"If the child will lend me that violin," he said. "I should like to try the instrument. 'Tis a good one."

Molly sought out Nan, who, with a group of girls about her, was propounding conundrums. The girl rose with alacrity, and taking King Solomon out of its case, gave it to the stranger, who looked it over carefully, caressingly, then, after a little, held it in position. He asked for no accompaniment, but, with steady movements and a delicate grace, played an old, old melody that brought Mrs. McKiseth forward, the tears in her eyes.

"Ay, an' that's the r'al old Irish tune," she said, "that draws the warmest blood from the far-

derest corner of the heart. You've been to ould Ireland maybe, and heard the lasses crooning it to the sick childer. It's a godsend when the pulse is failin' an' the heart is sobbin'. Sure, the Chiefs of Carnegie played it with drums and the ould fife of the O'Maurice."

He *had* heard it in Ireland, caught it from a piper, and paid him to play it again and again; but he did not say so. Everybody was listening and wishing for more; so, signalling for his hostess, he played a more ambitious solo to her accompaniment, while the people solaced themselves with refreshments. Ensign Harry read the fear in Mandy's eyes; and soon the girl was bountifully supplied with sandwiches, chocolate, and cakes.

"Oh, it was a beautiful, beautiful evening!" everybody declared, as the party broke up. Every face was lighted, every good-night given with thanks. Molly had issued the laws of etiquette in minor matters long before, and they were scrupulously observed.

Then the two women sat down to compare notes.

"The Bassetts were not here," said Ensign Harry.

"No; Sebastian is off again," Molly answered with a little sigh. "I fear there is no hope for him."

"Did you ever see such a happy face as that of poor Mandy Crump?"

"I watched her often;" and Molly smiled. "Poor little girl, it is worth all the cost and the trouble to see such a face now and then."

"And the new man? I noticed that you talked with him," said Ensign Harry; "did you like him?"

"Oh, yes, the new man! After all, he is not one of us. His nature and his thoughts are ruled by a supreme love of self. I am sorry, for I like him very much."

"He shall be one of us. We must work for him. To-night was one chance for baiting our hook. We have got hold of him. He will come again, and he will be sure to go to the meetings."

"How do you know?" asked Molly.

"I know by the way he looked at you," was on the girl's lips to say; but she refrained, not sure but her friend would resent it as an impertinence.

"I think he's interested — in the Salvation Army," she made reply.

"Perhaps — I hope so. He certainly is a man of energy — a printer. Printers are not always extraordinary men, but this is an extraordinary man. I could hardly believe that I never saw him before. It was like the shadow of a familiar presence haunting me. I don't like to feel that way. Do you know he is studying medicine?"

"I thought there was something grand about him that Sunday," said Ensign Harry. "If we

do catch him, it will be like hooking a leviathan. He will be hands and feet and head to our cause. I hope you made him understand that we took no stock in his infidel ideas."

"Of course he knows that. He is perhaps a little ashamed. But how he handled that violin! Did you ever hear pathos, real, unmixed pathos, such as that little Irish air, before? Curious that he should come to Paradise Flats."

"Not at all," Ensign Harry made brisk answer. "Haven't we nearly all the professions here? in a state of decay more or less pronounced to be sure—but still, here they are. I presume our gentleman-printer is poor, or he wouldn't come here. I'm sure I honor him for having the courage of his convictions. He is a man who wants to be helped, won't get in debt, has fixed his eye on fame in the future, and he will have it."

"But doing it all in his own strength," put in Molly.

"Wait and see," said Ensign Harry hopefully.

"Suppose we stop talking about him, and look over our list of work for to-morrow," said Molly.

She opened her tablets and read, running a pencil between the lines.

"On the march by ten—that's to go down to the shipping, and hold a prayer-meeting. Did you ever notice what thorough gentlemen most sailors are in the presence of ladies?"

"Through D Street from house to house. I

don't incline towards that, we get so much abuse ; but it pays sometimes. A visit to the almshouse to talk to the poor old people — there's always something interesting about that. Then march again to the hall for a meeting of praise. Six visits besides to six very bad people — poor things ! to try and teach them how to be clean. I think we ought to set up a cooking-school. But then, what time have we for that ? What with the sewing-class, the singing-class, and our little receptions, it is about all we can do to get on."

"To say nothing of baiting hooks to catch leviathans," laughed Ensign Harry ; and then looked troubled, for a faint flush mounted to Molly's cheeks as she rose and shut the piano, put the chairs in place, gathered the flowers together, and laid them all in a big basin of water to keep them fresh, answering not a word.

"And oh, mother ! I'd be willin' to work my fingers to the bone just to go sometimes. And oh, mother ! she's the sweetest, the most beautifullest, the kindest lady I ever see ! It was just like heaven there !"

That was Mandy's verdict, when at ten o'clock her father went after his pot of beer, vowing all manner of evil things if them Damnationists didn't send Mandy home to her wool-singed, hot, musty-smelling rooms by the time he returned.

CHAPTER XXIV

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE BANKER

All's fair in love and war.

JOHN HARDY sat alone in his new quarters. It was very cheerful at night. The student's lamp was alight, and the big armchair drawn close up to the bookcase, part of which turned down for a writing-desk.

"I haven't had such an evening for — well, I never had such an evening in my life!" he soliloquized. "She was simply angelical. I don't wonder they are all gone on her. Now, if she scores me for a convert, I shall have that hold upon her. In her thoughts, in her very soul, I shall be to her unlike other men. That allusion of mine to surgery was an inspiration."

He sat for a few moments lost in blissful revery.

What visions he saw! No need of a disguise now. He had taken off his spectacles; and if just then Molly could have seen him without them, despite the whiskers and the darker hair, she would have recognized him. Few men have such eyes, so deeply blue, so rich in depth, so magnificently shadowed by long, dark lashes.

No need to say he was already thoroughly ashamed of his assumption of atheistical proclivities.

Drunk with love's red wine, he would have given up every theory he had ever held, every one of the millions that made him the envy of his set. With this new incentive, he would have had more honor in her eyes as a man willing to spend his life in doing good, than if he were a hundred times a millionaire and wanting the principles that make manhood a success. Yes, now to win her, he would be the humblest private in that very Salvation Army he had so often ridiculed. His love was unselfish now. It dominated every fibre of his soul.

He was silent for a while.

He had caught at a chance at the *musicale* to speak to Ensign Harry; and she, in the innocence of her heart, had told him the whole story. How Molly was the daughter of a rich man, but had preferred this life to the grandeur of her own home; how sweet and gracious she was; how she won the hearts of all who saw her; and finally how, though her father at first had almost disowned her, that now he was willing she should come to the house whenever she would.

So he sat there dreaming. Suppose! and suppose! and suppose! "And if she once gets interested in me, as a stranger, sufficiently so to allow me sometimes to accompany her, I will wait

for love — yes, for years if need be. But suppose she should ask me to accompany her to her own house — what then? Only that the banker will question my standing, ridicule my assumed poverty, grow furious over my audacious pretensions. What am I to do?"

Clearly there was but one thing.

"Reveal my identity to him. I'll do it, and soon."

The next evening found him on the way to Banker Stanley's residence. He was ushered into the hall, a square apartment of princely dimensions, where stood chairs for lounging, screens of Oriental richness, and tall hassocks on each side of the wide fireplace.

"That's Stacey's voice!" said the banker to himself, hearing it through the open door; and he rushed forward to meet him, but recoiled as the stranger came forward step by step.

Who was this man with Stacey's voice, — a man in a working garb, his face tanned, blue spectacles, long mutton-chop whiskers, a cross, in his manner and dress, between the professional man and the laborer?

"Mr. Stanley! You don't recognize me," said the stranger, coming forward all smiles.

"I'll be hanged if I do. Excuse me, but I thought I knew the voice. You haven't got a package of dynamite about you, have you? Because if you have, I'll pull this cord, and there'll

be fireworks of the liveliest description. Great heavens! Stacey! Stacey after all! What the devil does this mean?" for the young man had taken off his blue spectacles, and with a touch pushed back his wig, disclosing the eyes and features of Stacey.

"It means — no dynamite," laughed Stacey.

"Why, you dear fellow! God bless you!" and of a sudden Stacey felt himself enclosed in a pair of stalwart arms.

"You make almost a child of me. I think you made a fool of me once before, in my own banking-house, by Heaven! But I forgive you — I see it all — I give you welcome, a hearty welcome! And as to the dynamite, my dear fellow — read this note, and then sit down and let me look at you. Where have you been all this time? What! you persist in wearing your disguise? I don't like it. What does it mean?"

"I will tell you — but first let me read this note. Ah! I see" —

Send me three thousand dollars or I will blow you up.

ONE WHO MEANS IT.

"That's cheerful," said young Stacey. "Well, what are you going to do about it?"

"Run the risk," laughed the banker. "Of course it's some fool. You see, he don't even say where I'm to send it. Oh! that is nothing compared to some of my correspondence. I confess, though,

that when I saw you, an apparent stranger, coming in with a familiarity that looked as if you knew the house, I was a little startled. I've been dealing heavily in bonds for the last month, and negotiating largely in all parts of the country, and it has gotten noised about. Ah, there are rogues in plenty—and dynamite is cheap. Let me ring for some refreshments."

"No; not a thing," said Stacey, "till after I have told you my story. My present name is John Hardy."

"Your present name! You startle me. What blunder have you committed that calls for an *alias*? By Heaven, the mystery grows!"

"It is nothing very alarming," said Stacey; "and I should have preferred keeping my incognito, only circumstances might combine in such a way as to make it embarrassing, if not difficult. I need not express to you again how much I love Molly."

"No—and you have my sanction—always have had."

"She repulsed me."

"Yes; and lessened my respect for her good judgment."

"She prefers Paradise Flats and a section of the Salvation Army—and God bless her for it!"

"What!" the banker had risen, and was taking short strides about the room. "You bless that

confounded little idiot for going counter to my will, and making a blanked fool of herself?"

"I bless her for her endeavors to benefit humanity. There isn't much hope in it; but there is something sublime in the girl's efforts which neither you nor I have the large gift of grace to understand. I can do so in a measure. It may be fanaticism; but if so, it is of the highest order and the purest kind. One evening, as I was sitting in my room at the hotel, an idea struck me. Molly had talked to me plainly, accusing me of selfishness, dilettantism, and good-for-nothingness in general. She was right. I did not see it then, but I do now."

"The queerest chicken that ever grew up without a mother's protecting wing," muttered the banker. "She makes me wonder how she came to belong to me."

"As I was saying, an idea entered my brain, upon which I acted at once. It was that I would win Molly on her own ground; that is, by taking the character of a workingman with — modestly I state it — superior abilities to the average. By living near her, and working in her direction, I could at once protect and reach her."

The banker had ceased walking, and now stood in front of Stacey, his hands in his pockets, chuckling. Suddenly he shook him by the shoulders.

"By Jove, Stacey! you are a trump!" he ex-

claimed. "What a pity to hide such a headpiece as yours under a wig! But I see, I see;" and he laughed on in a pleased way.

"So I adopted this disguise, took a room in Paradise Flats, — there are always rooms to rent in those places, — established myself there, and pass under the guise of a journeyman printer."

"Upon my word!" exclaimed the banker, more and more delighted.

"I am a self-made man, you understand; that is, to all appearance — I don't say anything about it — with aspirations beyond my calling. I have an ambition to study surgery, and a leaning toward philanthropy and misanthropy, in a religious way — see? I attend the Salvation meetings, and get no harm from that. Upon my word, I'm beginning to respect those Salvation people."

"Well, I confess to a little leaning that way myself," the banker agreed, pulling at one side of his abundant gray mustache. "I wish they would convert those dynamite fiends, and put on decent bonnets — the women, I mean. They go by here every Thursday night; and, by Jove, they're going by now!"

The two men went toward the window. It was a splendid moonlight evening. Now and then a carriage rolled by; the streets showed long lines of silver, and straight into the light came the little band on their way to some service. Suddenly they struck into song, with which the click

of the castanets mingled, and the clear, prolonged sound of the bugle aiding the voices of the women.

Every word came full, sonorous, distinct ; every form seemed outlined in moonlight, as they broke out, opposite the banker's house, —

“ On, soldiers, to the front !
 Rescue or death !
 Go, save the perishing,
 So my Lord saith.
 Up with your banners,
 Swords lifted bright,
 Save fallen souls for heaven,
 God, and the right ! ”

The two men moved back, looking into each other's eyes. Neither of them spoke for a time. Then Stacey said, his voice trembling a little, —

“ Is Molly with them ? ”

“ No,” the banker made reply. “ She promised me she would never march with them at night. That's the only concession I could get.”

“ They don't do that for money ; ” it was Stacey who spoke again.

“ Well, hardly,” said the banker, his voice a little husky. He was thinking of Molly ; and in spite of himself a sort of pride in her self-abnegation rose in his heart — a feeling that astonished as well as annoyed him.”

“ Isn't it horrid ? ”

The voice, high-pitched and petulant, sounded

near. In a rich dress of *crêpe-de-Chine*, the strong light bringing out the sheen of the lustrous pearls that shimmered all over its voluminous folds, stood Lucy. The long, undulating train, the richness of the costly material, the soft white arms bare to the shoulders, the edging of rich lace curling about a faultless bust, formed altogether a picture that to the careless observer was worthy of all admiration.

"They make me wild with their horrid music," was her next remark. "I only came, uncle, to show my new dress," she added in a lower tone, as Stacey moved away to the corner of the room intent upon a picture; "do you like it?"

"It's very pretty," said the banker, "very!" but he was thinking of any- and everything but her.

"I only wanted you to see me before I went to Mrs. Shaw's *musical*. I'm so delighted that I'm going! There will be the best professional music, and then Mrs. Shaw's spreads are something divine! I didn't know you had company. *Au revoir*;" and she was gone.

"Takes to it as naturally as ducks to water, doesn't she?" the banker asked, as the two men met again near the table in the middle of the room. "I — thought there was no need of an introduction; she considered you some workingman calling on business."

Stacey was thinking of the *musical* he had at-

tended so lately in Paradise Flats. This gorgeous creature of fashion in comparison with Molly in her chintz dress was as that of a princess to a peasant girl; yet how incomparably more beautiful was the real heir of all this grandeur! The world, the flesh, and the devil were written in marked characters all over Lucy's sparkling personality; for had she not sold herself, body and soul, for the sake of those advantages which wealth confers?

"To return to what I was saying," Stacey went on, "I thought that in some way I could make myself of use to Molly. It unnerved me to think of her in that house alone, so I laid my plans as you have heard."

"And so you are an inmate of Paradise Flats?" the banker exclaimed, as the two men sat down again, facing each other.

"Certainly I am; and intend to constitute myself her special guardian, whether she will or not. I am going to try under this guise to make myself so worthy of her love that she will accept the poor printer for a husband where she rejected the millionaire. This explanation seemed necessary, so, if she should condescend to take me for her escort, as she may some time, you will be on your guard."

"I see, I see!" said the banker, a touch of glee in his rather gruff voice. "Well, it's the most romantic thing I've ever heard of. No one but a man who has plenty of money, can write when he

wishes, poetize when he pleases, and play the fiddle, would ever have thought of it, by Jove ! And I wish you all the luck in life. If I were a young man I wouldn't mind going through the same experience. It gives a zest to existence, which groping around for values, and hunting up securities, and even handling millions, doesn't touch."

And then happened what neither of them had expected.

The door opened, and Molly entered. If Stacey didn't bless his stars that he had declined to throw off at least a part of his disguise, he never blessed them for anything.

"O dear papa !" said Molly, while Stacey glowed and bowed ; then hurriedly took his leave.

CHAPTER XXV

MY PRINTER

And knew that it was love.

"Do you know him, papa?" Molly asked, conscious and provoked that she was blushing.

"Eh? Slightly, my dear, slightly," was the guarded reply. "He comes to me now and then for advice."

"Ah!" said Molly, on her guard also.

"Yes — very good sort of man — for — ahem — his station — a printer — so he tells me. Very good! I shall put some work in his way."

Puff, puff, went the pipe, while the banker poked his papers about with an air of indifference.

What would happen next?

Molly was bewildered. Mr. Stanley was not, to her knowledge, in the habit of speaking of working-people in other than patronizing tones. Indeed, he was patronizing now, but there was a difference.

"I came a little late, papa, because I have some business to transact. I must say good-by, and go back as soon as possible."

"Well," her father responded, "let me know

how much you want. I'm in the mood to give you a large check."

"No, papa, I don't want any money ; but I have come to you to talk about money, and Sebastian Bassett."

"A drunken brute, if I recollect rightly," her father said.

"Drunken, but never brutal," Molly said, untying her hat-strings. "I also spoke of an English lady who came to see me about him."

"Yes ; his sister, wasn't she?"

"Oh, no !" Molly's face grew sympathetic. "From all I can gather, she is his cousin by the second remove, and devoted to him. She told me a part of her sad story. It appears they were once engaged to be married. The man gave great promise of reaching a high eminence in his profession. He fell again and again, but every time promised reformation."

"Those scamps always do," muttered the banker.

"Yes. He was exceedingly fond of society, and belonged to several clubs. On the last time appointed for the ceremony, he came home so drunk that the wedding had to be postponed."

"Indefinitely, I should hope," supplemented the banker.

"Yes ; and her heart was nearly broken."

"What ! she could still love that graceless scamp ?" the banker asked.

"Yes; and does yet. She has spent almost a fortune in trying to reclaim him."

"Then more's the pity for her," he rejoined.

"Yes, the more's the pity; for two lives are ruined," said Molly. "But to come to the point of this story. Sebastian's mother is dead, and has left in this lady's trust a fortune for her son; that is, to one situated as he is at present it would seem like a fortune,—ten thousand pounds! Now, the question is, how to manage matters? If he should come into possession at once, he would squander it—drink to excess, probably drink himself to death. The cousin says she thinks it the wiser course to deal it out sparingly, letting him believe that some friend is helping him. She wishes me to be her almoner and banker, and to put the money at interest. What would you suggest?"

"It is a somewhat delicate question," her father said, tapping the table with his gold-bowed glasses; "and I should rather submit it to a lawyer. Colby Brothers, who you know transact all my business of that sort, could decide. I'm willing to do what I can; but you see, money is money, especially a legacy, and I wouldn't touch it without legal advice."

"Then, shall I go to them?" asked Molly.

"As the matter has been committed to your judgment, I rather think you would better," her father said. He was not averse to giving his

daughter a practical illustration of the necessity for extreme caution in the disposal of money. He knew that she had a clear, logical mind ; and if she could get a grasp on legal principles, it would enable her to use her own fortune, when he had gone, to better advantage. As to her fearlessness, he had had sufficient proof of that ; so he decided to put her on her mettle, advise her, and let her carry on the business herself. It was curious to see this old hard-headed man talking with the sweet-faced woman before him exactly as if she had been a man, and in his secret soul hugging the thought that in all the wide world there were not many such daughters as she.

For, banker, financier, capitalist though he was, every energy strung to the highest tension of business, there was in him the capacity to be what he good-naturedly called those whose zeal bore them into the ranks of enthusiasts, — “a first-class crank.”

Molly rose to go.

“How will you get home ?” he asked.

The girl pointed to her badge. “Everybody respects this,” she said. “By the way, where is Lucy ?”

“Gone to a *musicale*,” was the answer.

“Don’t you ever go with her ?”

“Not to those crushes, if you please. Besides, she has her escort.”

“And when is she to be married ?”

"This day six months," he answered.

"Then what will you do?"

"I expect by that time my daughter will return to her duties in her father's house," he replied gravely.

"O papa! I have devoted my life to the work," was her quick answer.

"Charity begins at home. Come and try your magic on me for a little while. Or perhaps the poor old man is not worth the trouble of saving."

"O papa!" and she folded her two arms about his neck, and kissed him fervently. "If you consider yourself such a heathen that you need my help, why, I'm willing to begin now. Only you must come with me," she added playfully.

"What! to Paradise Flats?" he exclaimed, laughing. "Do you think your handsome printer would take me in?"

"*My* printer!" she exclaimed with a fair show of indignation. "Papa!"

"Well, well! I meant nothing, of course," he made reply. "But, Molly—come as often as you can. And don't hesitate to ask me for a check now and then."

Then she gave him another kiss, with tears in her eyes,—surely he was doing his utmost to draw her toward him,—and bade him good-night.

CHAPTER XXVI

AN UNWELCOME FOLLOWER

Thick, guttural, maudlin tones.

As Molly moved down the street, a shadow emerged from the corner, followed by John Hardy.

"Do you object to my walking with you, Miss Stanley?" he asked, so gently, so deferentially, in that low, musical voice of his, which, in spite of herself, she compared to Stacey's, that she could not find it in her heart to say no.

"You did not go to the meeting to-night," he said, as they walked together.

"No; I had some business to transact." Then they went on in silence for a few minutes.

"I also made a business call," he said. "But the meetings are growing very interesting to me; and since the people are willing to listen, I am willing to be led by them. I can say that I was never in the midst of such a downright set of people before."

"Because they are in earnest," said Molly.

"Exactly—I feel that; but what they do interests me more than what they say. If ever I am converted, it will be because with them faith and works go together."

They were passing a low grog-shop. Standing in the doorway, in the full glare of the blood-red light, was Sebastian, a wolfish look in his eyes, a saturnine expression in the face usually so good-humored.

He tipsily removed his hat, lifting the broken brim, for he recognized Captain Molly; then, staggering, followed her. A wild idea had taken possession of his besotted brain; it was that the man beside her meant mischief.

"You jes' le' go of her," he muttered, coming up to the two, and touching Stacey on the arm.

"See here, my man, you don't know what you're talking about," said Stacey kindly; "move on — let us pass."

"Sha'n't do any such thing," said the drunken man. "I'm a gen'leman; you're a — a — Lord knows what — I'm an English gen'leman, coat of arms and all that — good family — born to influence — unfortunate — able to sell pictures for thousands — she's a lady — banker's daughter — came to us in mishfortune — beautiful girl — likes me, likes my wife an' Sebastian Junior — jest you let go of her."

"O Mr. Bassett!" said Molly, in a pleading voice, "let us alone. I have placed myself under this gentleman's protection. If you had not been drinking you would know better."

"Angel of my life," said Sebastian, his hand over his heart, "adorable Miss Stanley, I shall be

obliged to give this common person a lesson — I " —

Before he could go farther, Stacey sent him reeling, with one blow, headlong into the gutter.

"I couldn't help it," he said passionately; "the drunken, insolent hound, to talk to a lady in that way! Now, if you please, we'll hurry a little, and I'll come back and see what I can do for the man. What if you had been alone? I'm not fearful that he is very badly done for, — you know a drunken man seldom gets hurt; but if any bones are broken, I know how to set them."

Molly quickened her steps. To tell the truth, she was a little frightened, having never seen the man in this mood before.

What if he should go home in the same condition? Poor little Reine and the baby Sebastian were wholly unprotected — and oh, the misery of it! they were housed in a cellar, while there was the magic of money just let into their lives, and they unconscious of the fact.

Stacey's action, though for the moment it startled her, yet excited her admiration. How quickly it was done, and for her protection! She scarcely knew him, yet in the brief time of their acquaintance he had exhibited all the qualities that in her eyes made a man admirable. He was brave, studious, outspoken, and musical. No doubt he could write logically, express himself in verse, and most assuredly he played the violin to perfection.

She had never, she thought, heard a better amateur performer. Even Stacey, who, she knew, had possessed excellent talent for music, did not play as well as this humble mechanic.

By this time they were at the house. Molly ran up-stairs, and Stacey hurried back to the scene of the disaster. No one was there. Whether the man had picked himself up, and gone home, sobered a little by the encounter, or whether the police ambulance had conveyed him to the hospital, he had no means of knowing.

CHAPTER XXVII

A SWEET OLD SONG

Clear as a bell, the sweet tones rose.

NAN GARTIA was making rapid improvement in her studies. The professor was in ecstasy. "Great heavens! She causes in me a rapture I cannot control. It's in the blood," he said. "The men were all musicians, and the mantle has fallen on her. My millionaire pupils are not worth a rap in comparison with this little pauper. She outweighs them all. I shall make her queen of the violin."

The lessons went on swimmingly. Little Nan, with more intelligent feeding, grew strong, rosy, and, in more than one sense, beautiful. The practice on the roof she called her out-door concerts, and enjoyed them with the aid of an old music-stand the professor had given her, and one patched and broken chair from their room underneath.

The foot passengers below often heard the sweet strains that, caught by the upper air, were wafted down into the crowded streets like melodies from heaven, and wondered where the unseen musician could be. No eye saw the child perched

up in her wind-palace, the blue dome of the sky above, the southern hilltops in the distance, playing away for dear life in front of the great square chimney, against which she had posted herself and her music.

“Captain Molly will like this,” or “Captain Molly wants me to do that” — all was done for love of Captain Molly. The child played her small duets with Mr. John, as she called him. They were getting on famously, the three, — Molly, Stacey, and the child. Sometimes they all met in Captain Molly’s room. She was really a captain now, having earned her brevet by good work ; and though she did not crave the title, she felt that it gave her an additional influence among the people she sought to help.

It was getting near winter, and the evenings were long. After the day’s duties, it was the usual habit to meet in Captain Molly’s room for practice.

What charming rehearsals they were ! Molly at the piano, Nan on one side, Stacey on the other.

With sweet, flushed face Captain Molly would demonstrate some particular movement, or call Stacey’s attention to something forgotten, — purposely forgotten, alas ! — and Nan would watch to catch the slightest inspiration from face and fingers. Now and then Mrs. McKiseth sat in an armchair by the fire, knitting and listening. And yet, though Harry hinted, and Stacey hoped, Molly

did not realize that she was slowly and surely drifting into that passion which idealizes all life. It was a rapturous repose after the hard duties of the day, once or twice in a week to meet thus together, to compare notes, keep up practice, and look into the luminous eyes whose brightness the blue spectacles did not altogether hide.

Stacey, after long and decent opposition, had grounded arms, and laid down the weapons of his warfare. There was a fascination in the method used to convince him that he could not resist — there was a more subtle fascination in the gentle witcheries of Captain Molly. Besides that, his deeper nature was roused to the needs of the human beings around him. He had never been brought face to face with poverty before. Crump the tailor was an enigma to him; and his outspoken dislike to the "Damnation Army," as the little tailor persisted in calling it, amused more than it revolted him. He saw how, for love of the child, the crooked mind of the tailor relaxed its rigidity, and let the girl Mandy go her way in peace. He saw what he had never even suspected, — that the poor were kinder to each other, their love ran in broader, deeper channels, their sympathies were quicker, than in the more advanced class of which he was an exponent.

It was a constant wonder to him that the members of the Army were so indefatigable in their efforts to raise the fallen and rescue the perish-

ing. What but a pure and exalted emotion carried those delicate women into dens foul with disease, sent them on their knees to clean the kennels of vice, and gave them patience to teach where seldom gratitude repaid? There must be some great underlying, upholding motive.

And so he surrendered; not as he had expected to do, for the sake of gaining the heart of the fair captain only, but because he was convinced of their purity, self-denial, and power.

To confess himself vanquished, and to ask for help in his search after light, was to make large inroads into Captain Molly's heart. She called him a dear friend, almost a brother — a very helpful brother, to whom she felt it not unseemly to go for advice. She never thought of the future, so had she accustomed herself to believe that her life had been given her to consecrate to the work of reform. That he should give his also for the same object was natural to suppose; and so why might they not go on, working side by side for the regeneration of the world?

Ensign Harry had her own little notions on the subject. She watched and smiled, and then watched, often with a saddened and perplexed face, as she whispered to her own heart, "They love each other. What will be the outcome? Probably entire alienation from her family — and he a poor man!"

As for Stacey, he could sing:—

“Ceremony was devised at first,
To set a gloss on faint deed — hollow welcomes,
Recanting goodness, sorry ere 'tis shown;
But where there is *true* friendship, there needs none.”

The flavor of Bohemia attracts most men, — the Bohemia of heartily human, happy-go-lucky beings, with as distinctive an air of exclusiveness as belongs to those who call themselves better than their fellows; and this was partly what attracted Stacey, whose one only and definite aim had been to steal the love of the woman who had so ruthlessly cast him aside.

“Wouldn't you like to hear me recite or sing one of these times?” asked Mrs. McKiseth one night, when the elements were at war, and Molly and Stacey were making out the programme for the next *musicale*.

“You!” and Captain Molly glowed as she smiled in the apple-like face of the shrewd old woman. “Why, Mrs. McKiseth, I cannot tell you what a treat it would be.”

“If ye'll hear an ould Irish song, an' ye'll none o' ye make faces at an ould woman's singing, ye may put me down,” said Mrs. McKiseth, her eyes twinkling. “'Twas wrote for meself by a rare Irishman, who knew jest how to touch the heart-beats of sorrow, an' turn 'em into po'try,” was her rejoinder.

“Sing it, granny,” pleaded Nan. “Sing it for them now as you sing it to me.”

"Git away wid ye, mavourneen," the little Irish-woman said, with a shake of the head.

"Yes, sing it, granny, then we can tell how it will sound when the company is here," said Captain Molly.

"Give me a drink of wather then, to clear the ould pipes," was the laughing answer. And then she sang in a sweet, firm voice, that as Ensign Harry afterwards said fairly made her hair rise, it was so young and musical, what she called : —

AN IRISH LAMENT.

But oh, the dear, dead face,
Wi' its olden laughin' light,
There's nothing sure like drames
To cheat us in the seemin'.
And it's what! shall I be sorry
For the vision of the night?
Or glad we two did meet
In the misty land o' dreamin'?

And och! his dear, sweet face!
Wid the glad smile upon it,
Which once could light the hearth
When the coals was dead and dhry.
If there's anywheres a home
Wid the saints, my Jamie's won it;
But I am left a stranded weed,
Atwixt the earth and sky.

The day, I long to have it gone,
The night, I wist it past,
I'm all in ruins since the hour
I dressed his death-cold clay.

Would I let another touch the boy,
Whose curls my hand cut last?
I loved to black the very shoon
He wore from day to day.

No, there was nothin' menial
In what I did for Jamie,
I'd give my eyes to plase him
To make him smart and fine.
I loved to tie his kerchief on,
The merry whistling laddie,
And get a chuck aneath the chin,
An' his two lips on mine.

I'm aye the sorrowfulest wife,
I won't say widdy — no;
Though rains have wept and suns have smiled,
And lads have spoke me sweet.
It's by mesilf I'll toil in tears,
Mesilf, I'll sow and gather,
I'll just drift through the lonesome years,
'Til my dear lad I meet.

"Why, it's just a musical wonder," said Captain Molly, catching at the withered hand. "What a singer you must have been once!"

"Ay — they said my voice could be heard from Glenairn to East Wynd on a clear day," she said joyously. "Jamie and me sang in the mass in the great cathedral, and many a stranger's come across the river to hear us. Yes, I was *glai* at singing in my younger days; but when Jamie died, I lost the care for it, though not the love. If I'd had a chick of my own, she should have played like Nan here; but I never did." She went

on knitting, shaking her pretty gray, white-capped head.

"But who wrote the poem?" asked Stacey.

"Oh, 'twas a tall lad got crossed in love, and he wore black hair down to his shoulthers. They say he never slept in a house after that, but went wandering round, writin' verses for folk, and singing beautiful himself. He was a North of Ireland man, a nephew of the priest, and his eyes wor that keen that they'd make you shiver to look at. The girl that jilted him married a lord, but she only lived a year. Folks said it was a sorrow on her because she'd turned away from the man she loved for the r'ason that he was poor. Lord bless you, I'd lived wid my Jamie in a mud-cabin widout a floor; that was me!"

Through some unknown occult influence the eyes of Captain Molly met those of Stacey. What was it that sent the quick blood flushing along her cheek — who could tell?

"It's very curious," thought she, with a little shudder, "curious and foolish too! I like him well enough, but — love — nonsense!"

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE LOST CHILD

O! such a cry wrung from a mother's heart.

THERE was a clatter of footsteps on the stairs, a cry, a succession of cries, sharp, distinct, appalling. Ensign Harry sprang to her feet; Stacey took a step or two forward; Molly turned pale, for she knew the voice.

Ensign Harry opened the door with fear and trembling. There stood Reine, her face distorted, her eyes swollen with weeping, her garments saturated with water.

"What is it? What has happened, Reine?" asked Molly, rushing towards her.

"Oh, my God! the baby!" cried the woman. "I ran out after him. The rain is pouring, the wind is blowing—and my darling has only his nightgown on. Sebastian was never this way before. Always he is quiet and pleasant, you know, Miss Stanley—but to-night, furious. What could I do? I was afraid for my life. He said the devils were after him. Then he saw baby asleep in his little new wicker cradle. He snatched him up

and ran out into the storm. Oh, it does storm so! My baby! My baby!"

"This is terrible!" said Captain Molly. "What fiend could have possessed him? What will he do with that dear child?"

"Which way did he go?" asked Stacey.

"Down the street, across the square. I followed him till all at once I lost sight of him. I went hither and thither. Nobody had seen him. You see how dripping wet I am. Oh, but what will he do with my boy, my beautiful boy?" and she stood there wringing her hands. "I dare not go out; I dare not go down-stairs. I am almost crazy."

Stacey, who had left the room, now came down, lantern in hand, accoutred for the storm. He made Reine give him, in as concise form as possible, the direction taken by the maniac; for that he undoubtedly was,—an utterly irresponsible man for the time being. He went out, while the women found dry garments, and noted how like a child poor little Reine looked as she stood in her distress by the fire, robing herself.

"I couldn't go any farther," she sobbed; "my strength gave out. I'm all of a tremble now; I feel as if I should die. O my precious baby! And there's no knowing if I shall ever see him again, or Sebastian either."

Now it was that Granny McKisseth came to the rescue with words of comfort, and took the

weeping creature in her arms as if she had been her own child, crooning her soft Irish lullaby with the poor little head on her bosom.

An hour passed — and then another. The women waited, while Reine, having fallen asleep from exhaustion, breathed heavily.

At last Stacey returned.

Reine still slept.

Sebastian, the father, had been found, but no trace yet of the child!

Molly clasped her hands in mute agony. What news for the poor mother!

"We traced him down to the river," said Stacey in low tones, while the fire-flames brought into strong relief every emotion pictured on the white faces turned towards him.

"And do you think" — Molly began with trembling lips, but could get no farther.

"I have men out on the search. I don't know what to think. It is so stormy — nothing further can be done till to-morrow. Then I will advertise — set the whole police-force at work — employ private detectives."

"You know there is money in plenty," said Molly.

"Yes, I know."

They had not yet broken the news of Sebastian's good fortune to him or to his wife. The man had been in no condition to understand it for weeks; Reine had all the money she needed, and

as usual Sebastian had taken his meagre earnings for drink, or coaxed his wife to supply him. Matters were in progress to provide them with a better home, as Reine would not leave him; and the two rooms had been furnished on the second floor, where they might live in comfort till the madman either reformed or died. For his habits were telling on Sebastian's magnificent frame and originally strong constitution. Instead of yielding to his inclination once a week, he came home daily in a besotted condition.

"Where is Sebastian?" asked Molly.

"In his room. I put him immediately under the action of sedatives, and that, added to his great fatigue, sent him to sleep. How long that may continue I cannot tell. He is evidently on the eve of a bad delirium. If his wife can be kept here, I will undertake to care for him."

Every preparation was made for the night. Reine was wakened; but it was evident that her grief and exposure had induced fever, for she talked incoherently, and appeared oblivious to all her surroundings.

Stacey made the man his charge, and shared with Molly the care of poor little Reine, who for days lay unconscious, and wakened at last to a feeble sense of her misery.

Meantime, the child was not heard of, though every means had been employed to find him.

"We shall never see him again," said Molly.

"He was probably thrown into the river." And so the disappearance of the child remained shrouded in mystery.

Day and night, night and day, Stacey fought the fiend in Sebastian, till reason conquered, and the man slept and talked naturally once more. It had been a case of great interest to Stacey from a professional point of view, for then he first realized what were the duties, cares, pleasures, anxieties, of the profession; and he became so absorbed that he scarcely gave himself time for rest or refreshment. Many times he despaired. Often it required all his great personal strength to keep the patient within bounds; and his joy was extreme when at last he saw the devils he had been fighting take their departure, leaving the man a helpless white hulk lying before him, conscious at last, though weaker than a child. It was better worth living for, more exciting, than any season he had ever spent among the votaries of wealth and fashion; and he blessed Molly in his heart of hearts, feeling that it was to her he owed the luxury of knowing that he could be of some use to his fellow men.

While Reine was not yet out of danger, Sebastian opened his eyes one morning, looked around, saw a strange face regarding him, and closed his eyes again with a movement of annoyance.

"You're all right now," said Stacey, going towards the bed. "It was a hard pull, though."

"What's been the matter?" the man asked suddenly, shrugging his shoulders.

"Drunkenness," was the answer.

"What!" and Sebastian looked up wildly.

"The usual results of whiskey drinking," was Stacey's reply; "the brain congested, the liver inflamed, the stomach ulcerated, and all the devils in hell after you in full force."

"In other words?" muttered the man intelligently.

"In other words, a drunken madness, *delirium tremens*, *mania potu*, — call it by either name."

"Damnation!" was the response.

"That's it exactly; as you would have found to your sorrow if you had gone drunk into another existence."

"Why didn't you let me? I'm not worth saving."

"Hardly," was the cool reply; "but your wife seemed concerned about you. My motto for drunkards is, the sooner they die off, the better."

"Ain't you a cool kind of devil? I think I've seen you before," said Sebastian.

"One has to be cool when dealing with such fellows as you," was the answer. "Yes, you have seen me before, on several occasions. I am what you might call a humanitarian."

"Where's my wife?" was the next question.

"Sick of typhoid fever, up-stairs in Captain Molly's room."

"Good God! typhoid fever! Is she going to die?"

"I hope so," was the cool response.

"What kind of a devil are you?"

"A devil with a better conscience than you have."

"Why do you hope that?"

"I don't really see what she has to live for," was the reply. "You can't have the vanity to suppose that she cares to live on your account."

The man's countenance fell. "No;" and he shook his head with a sigh. "Poor Reine! but the baby! She might want to live for little Sebastian. Where is he?"

"I don't know."

"Some of the women have got him, of course."

"I don't know," Stacey repeated gravely. He was considering what course he should pursue.

"The boy isn't dead, is he?" and now ensued the first symptoms of real feeling that the man had yet exhibited.

"I don't know."

"To hell with your 'don't knows.' Where is my boy?"

"I tell you again I don't know," said Stacey. "If anybody does, you ought to."

The man looked at him with wild, widening eyes.

"I—I left him with his mother," was the reply.

"Look here, my friend, you are sober now. As a humanitarian, I brought you through one of the worst cases of alcoholic frenzy that I ever heard or read of. As a humanitarian, perhaps I should have let you die for the good of the survivors. You came home drunk, raving, exactly ten days ago. It was a wild, stormy night. The fiends had full possession of you. You snatched your boy, little Sebastian, sleeping soundly in his cradle, and rushed out into the storm — the act of a madman. Your wife followed you for some time, but finally lost sight of you. From that hour to this little Sebastian has not been seen, nor can we hear any news of him. What you did with him God only knows, and may *He* have mercy on your soul."

The effect of the speech was startling. Grasping the bedclothes in both hands, the man lifted himself, haggardly handsome yet, then joined his hands above his head with a frightful imprecation.

"God of heaven ! did I do that, or are you tormenting me ?" he shrieked.

"Heaven forbid that I should torment you. I leave your whiskey-drowned conscience to do that. You love whiskey better than your wife, your child, your God."

"No, no ! don't say that ! There is nothing in heaven or on earth that I love as I love little Sebastian ;" and the bed shook with his heavy sobs.

"If you had been a sober man, you might to-

day have rejoiced in your child. But as a drunken father, no one knows what you have done with him — thrown him into the river perhaps.”

“No, no, no !” and the man put out his hands, agony in every supplicating movement. “O my boy, my boy ! My beautiful, cherubic, angelic child ! Give him back to me, O great God, and I swear to you I will never touch a drop again as long as I live !” His powerful frame shook in anguish.

“Oh, you have promised that a thousand times,” said Stacey. “Think for a minute — search your memory. Where did you go with him ?”

“With him ! Sebastian ! my baby ! out in the cold and rain and storm ! as God lives, I don’t remember that I touched him. I did not ! You are lying to me — trying to frighten me into sobriety. Oh, thank you for it — thank you for it ! Only say you are trying to frighten me !”

“I wish I could,” said Stacey, with an air of such sincerity that Sebastian trembled from head to foot. His strength was gone, and he fell back more dead than alive.

“Are — you — still — trying” — he whispered, “to find him ?”

“Yes ; we are still trying — trying to hope. It is so long since.”

“I took my baby out into the storm ! Ten thousand devils ! If ever I touch another drop of the infernal stuff may God consign my soul to

eternal damnation. Give me a Bible. There's a Bible somewhere, a poor torn old Bible. Reine used to read it, poor little soul! Yes, that's it; thank you. Open it where the name of God is. I believe in God. Do you? Put my finger on the very word. I'm too weak. Yes, now — I swear, with my finger on the name of God Almighty, that I hope to be consigned to the very devils that have been tormenting me, if ever I touch a drop of fermented spirits again, so help me God!"

There was silence — but in the distance came the mingled sound of flutes and castanets. On they came, the music growing louder — on to Sebastian's door, when they broke into song: —

“Help for the perishing,
Rescue or death!
Help for the perishing,
So my Lord saith.
Up with your banners,
Swords lifted bright,
Save fallen souls for heaven,
God, and the right!”

From the eyes of both men the hot tears were welling — in one tears of sympathy, in the other tears of repentance. Stacey almost broke down, when Sebastian said, struggling for composure, —

“The boy loved it so! My God! he would stop breathing to listen — and his eyes” — a great convulsive sob closed the sentence.

CHAPTER XXIX

CAPTAIN MOLLY'S ANSWER

You witching thing with eyes like stars!

IN Stacey's mind there was hope for Sebastian. The loss of his child, his anguish at having been the probable murderer of the thing he loved best in life, changed the whole aspect of the man, body and soul. He said very little, but sat brooding over the past, and it was difficult to attract his attention. He seemed to shrink from the thought of seeing Reine, and would walk the floor of the rooms to which his furniture had been transferred, his moody eyes on the floor, and muttering often the words, "Too late! too late!"

Stacey had undertaken to convey to him the news of his altered fortune; but the man listened with an apathetic stare, and only muttered, "Too late! too late!"

He seemed, indeed, to take no further interest in life; and it was pitiful to see him sitting plunged in thought, scarcely moving for hours.

Captain Molly had caused him to be provided with all the implements of his profession, but in vain she coaxed and labored. He took the brush,

but no inspiration followed. His heart seemed dead within him.

After a time Reine left her sick-room, and her forgiving and pitying nature yearned toward him. As soon as she could be moved, she also was domiciled in her new quarters, and set her poor wits to work to try and comfort him.

The cradle had been taken away. Molly put aside the pretty clothes that had belonged to the little child, and silenced gossip as best she could.

One heavenly day Stacey asked Molly to go with him on a mission of mercy.

"You have been so long housed up that it will do you good to take the fresh air," he said. "A friend of mine has given me the use of his horses and carriage. The drive is rather a long one; but we shall be home early in the evening, and there will be a full moon."

It did not take much to persuade her, and Molly hastened to prepare for the drive.

Stacey had hoped a great deal from this occasion. He was relatively sure that he and Molly understood each other now, and quite sure that he was not deceiving her. In many things vital to his spiritual life he knew himself to be a changed man. The novelty of the situation had worn off, but not its interest. As to taking her from her work, he was not eager to do that, at least, so he tried to persuade himself; but he wanted her — he wanted her to be his for time and for eternity.

The drive was a long one, twenty miles at the least, but the horses were strong and handsome; in fact, Molly, sitting languidly back on the delicately upholstered cushions, wondered what friend would trust such a team out of his own hands. On they bowed, till they reached a lonely farmhouse that stood far back from the road, the long-neglected driveway showing a brown and yellow tangle of last year's weeds, the windows, doors, and steps of the mansion indicating little usage and no care. A white sun simmered along the much-rutted country road. The fields in the distance looked yellow and parched, as if thirsting for rain.

The house itself was an imposing structure, but had long since lost the glory of its original surroundings. It had been the product of riches; it was now the abode of penury.

Here had lived a man whom the Salvation Army had taken up and reformed, but who, lapsed from the grace that had helped and cared for him, had fallen into temptation, and was at the present time serving out his term in State Prison. The wife had appealed to her husband's old comrades for help in some matter pertaining to her husband's situation; and Stacey had volunteered to go and inquire into the matter, hoping thus to secure a long and uninterrupted *tête-à-tête* with Captain Molly.

Molly, however, had been on her guard during

the drive. She did not attempt to deny to herself that it was a delight unparalleled to be at his side; to smile at his attempts to aid her as she entered the carriage — he elected to appear clumsy; to look into his eyes, all the time conscious of a desire to pull those horrible glasses off; to watch the quick, nervous expression of his lips and his fingers; but she would never allow him to take the lead in conversation, for fear — of what?

Ah! that she would not even whisper to herself. After the core of the story, if story it was, had been reached, she held him to it with questions and exclamations and snatches of delightful sentiment regarding the scenery, or perhaps some reminiscence of yesterday's experience among her poor people.

If she had known the depth of her self-deceiving — this soft-eyed, pure-minded maiden; if she had dreamed that Stacey led her fancy at his will, not yet being willing to risk a declaration; if she could have seen that he saw through the transparency of her guile, how her indignation would have flamed forth!

There was but one question that troubled him. If he should win her in this guise, how was he to explain? how change his manners and his life? This thing puzzled him till they drew up at the gate of the queer old mansion.

"It's an old-timey place," she said; "looks quaint and ghostlike!"

"Will you sit here, or go in?" he asked. "The horses are perfectly safe."

He knew them well; they were his own, a recent purchase.

"Oh! I'll get out. I'm very fond of old houses. I am sure this one has a history," she said. "I like to find the heart of things — if there is any heart to find. I'm afraid, though, it is as dismal within as without."

It was dismal.

A yellow dog, with a dirty, crumpled blue ribbon tied round his neck, ran snarling and snivelling to the door. He was followed by a white-capped, frowsy-headed woman, slovenly from her head to her heels. Captain Molly went in slowly, lingeringly. There were at least fresh air and sunshine outside; while the mingled odors of cabbage and kerosene oil saluted her delicate nostrils as she entered — strong reminder of the slums.

A wide door led into the desolate room called by courtesy the parlor. But before she went in, Molly's eyes travelled in the opposite direction, where she saw a wide-eyed baby seated on the floor, a dirty white kitten in his grasp.

A wild cry of delight, and with one bound she had reached the child.

"O my *dear* friend!" she gasped, "we have found Sebastian! little Sebastian! No other child could look like him! Oh, the goodness of the dear Lord! Come here, you beauty of beauties! How

did he get in this far-off place? Tell me, madam, what fairy brought him? O madam, he cannot be your child—or any one belonging to you! See, he knows me! he remembers me!”

The little fellow was clinging to her now, his beautiful eyes laughing as of old, full-throated, chin-dimpled, with the white and the rose-leaf blending on his cheek—the heavenly face had suffered no diminution of loveliness. No trouble seemed to have dimmed the lustre of his smile, as she lifted him in her arms.

“Why, no, miss, that’s none o’ mine, miss; but I’ve been caring for him, though really I hadn’t enough to care for myself,” was the quick but somewhat subdued reply.

“But how came he here? Quick, I am longing to know. His father and his mother, poor souls, are dying by inches. Nobody dreamed he was still alive.”

“La, ma’m, it’s quite a story;” and the woman fumbled at her cap-strings. “Well, you see, Jacob, that’s my son, went into the city one day with a load of potatoes. I says, says I, ‘Jacob, take the covered wagon, and go down to Cousin Lizabeth’s, an’ git my feather bed my mother left me.’ You see, I’d lended it to her, an’ she’d writ that she didn’t want it no longer.

“So Jacob, he’d sold all the potatoes,—we keep ’em in sand, and they’re right good for late ones,—’n’ got the feather bed. By that time, ther’d a

storm come up. Jacob sayd it rained awful, 'n' he got wet through. So he stopped in a barroom to git some bitters, jest as his father used to, an' stayed later than he thought. Anyway, he didn't git home till twelve o'clock at night, an' me a-waitin' an' a-waitin'.

"When he drives into the yard, bless you, a child begins to cry. It wasn't rainin' then, 'n' I stood on the porch with a candle. He said he guessed the wagon was bewitched — an' come to look, there were this baby! Well, you might 'a' knocked me down with a straw. Nobody can't tell how it came there — Jacob couldn't. Some one must 'a' throwed it in when he was drinkin'.

"Of course it had to be taken in and cared for; and then it got sick, and I nussed it well, and there's the hull story. I'm glad you've found it; 'cause Jacob can't abide children, and they do cost. I shouldn't wonder if this un'd cost me three dollars a week, or nigh onto it. I ought to have pay for his keep."

"You shall — all you ask; but didn't you know the child had been advertised in the papers?"

"Papers!" the woman exclaimed with a blank look. "No papers never gits here. And we don't have no neighbors likewise to tell us news. It's livin' like heathen we be."

"But how did you manage to dress him?" asked Captain Molly, giving the little one another hug.

"Oh! I had a lot of Jacob's old clothes he wore

when he was a baby. They was a little old-fashioned; but they served, and so" —

"Of all things!" and Captain Molly laughed heartily, raining kisses on the cherub face. "Oh, I'm so glad! so happy! Mr. John Hardy, when shall we go home? And what shall I put round this blessed baby? To think that his father had sense enough to throw him into a feather bed, instead of into the river! I shall always respect Sebastian's judgment after this. Yes, I know I am talking the veriest nonsense," she ran on, catching Stacey's smile; "but if you knew how much — I — love — this — blessed baby!" every word emphasized by a hug that almost sent poor Stacey wild with envy.

The business, what there was, was speedily arranged. The good-hearted matron insisted on setting before them a pitcher of milk, with bread and honey, of which the two gladly partook. A sort of bonnet was found for baby Sebastian, that had been lying in the dark for twenty years at least; and a shawl was fished out of an old bureau drawer, in which to wrap him.

It was not long before the three were on their way home.

The baby was rather a bond between Molly and Stacey; for whenever Molly talked to it and coddled it, Stacey put his face as close to hers as he dared, to fondle it after his fashion, and do his part of the baby-talk.

Presently there came out a round, white, glorious moon ; but before that the baby was lying, fast asleep, against Molly's bosom, and to Stacey the two looked like some heavenly vision. How should he quiet the human cry in his breast ? Surely the time had come now, if ever.

Now and then they passed a pretty farmhouse, here and there a cot nestling close to the bosom of mother earth. Far away the green hills stood in silent beauty, like guardians of the hamlet. Across the fields the snake-like fences ran hither and yon, broidered with gold and red from fuzzy bushes and wandering vines. It was all so tranquil ! and so was this vision at his side.

His heart grew hungry. He could stand it no longer, this devouring passion, this longing for an answering love.

"It's no use, Miss Stanley," he said in a deep, manly voice, after a long silence. "I have tried to be discreet, prosaic, fraternal ; but every phase has given me the lie direct. By Heaven, I love you deeply, passionately, for life and death, for earth and for eternity."

And she, with blended hope and fear, had she looked for this declaration ?

"Mr. John Hardy — you — forget " — she began formally.

"Of course I forget — I forget every dictate of prudence — I forget everything but that I am crazy for love of you — you, the first woman I

have ever thought of with a prayer," and his voice sounded almost like a sob. "You must give me a little hope," he went on tenderly.

"But what have I to do with such hope? You know I am devoted to my work. I cannot leave it. No, no, I cannot!"

"I don't ask you to. No, indeed! I love you so much. Believe me, my love is unselfish. I — had hoped that sometimes you gave me a thought — not as you think of others."

She was looking at the baby's face, that seemed unearthly beautiful in the moonlight. It smiled as she looked. She was glad — she was sorry — she was happy — she was frightened at her own thoughts and emotion.

"You have no word for me?" he went on, drawing his breath hard.

"Not — now," was the almost inarticulate answer.

"But some time — some time, my own, you will give me an answer? You do not dislike me?"

She looked up. Her smile was rare and radiant. What more could he ask? But she spoke, —

"Some time, perhaps — if you will be patient."

"Patient! Your love is worth waiting for a thousand years!" he made passionate reply.

"Oh, not quite so long as that!" she said, laughing softly.

"Yes; if only at last in that Golden City you have taught me to believe in, it is given to me,"

he said. "I will wait with all the patience you can desire, if you will answer me one or two questions : I am not wholly indifferent to you ? "

" Oh, no, no ! " she said, the red blood deepening the roses of her cheek.

" You — have never loved another — there is no one " — he hesitated.

" Spare me your questions," she faltered, her pulses leaping with a sudden ecstasy — " and be patient."

CHAPTER XXX

THE BAPTISM OF FIRE

One living hell of flame.

JUST here my pen falters and fails. Human love, sorrow, grief, joy, defy description. One might as well attempt to describe how the lily bursts into bloom, or a soul is born into God's eternity.

I can only say, the awful gloom that encompassed two souls broke into the sunburst of dawn, and then into the full blue and golden glory of the perfect day.

When Reine first heard that the child was found, like a scared dove she flew to her husband's bosom; and there he held her until soft, white arms went round his neck, and the sweet voice of his baby wakened his dead heart to the resurrection of a new manhood.

"O my boy!" he sobbed from an overflowing heart; "may God take thee from me *forever*, if I ever taste the accursed thing again!"

Captain Molly then knew what it was to take deep draughts of happiness from the cup of bliss. To see this man, so long bound in chains that

seemed adamant, surrender, to feel that something of her influence had been at work in his heart, was full and complete happiness. Everybody in Paradise Flats was hilarious over the coming home of Baby Bassett. There had been much of head-shaking, of whispering in dark places, much of pity, much of gossip ; but now the whole house was jubilant. Through love a man had been saved ; through the sweetest, the holiest, the divinest human love, — that of wife and child.

Throngs came in to see the wonder that had been wrought ; and the beautiful child, like a prince on his throne, smiled graciously on them all.

He looked round at the frankincense and myrrh they brought him in the shape of candy cats, nuts, sugar dogs, tin trumpets, and what not, quite uncertain which one to appropriate first.

The suit of new mourning that the pale-faced little dressmaker up-stairs had nearly finished was bought outright by Molly, and transferred to another party. Nan played her last lesson, which master Sebastian seemed to appreciate more than all the rest.

But when the Salvation Army came down the street, and stopped to a man to sing —

“Rescue the perishing,”

and after that cheered lustily, three times three, the men swinging their hats and the women their

bonnets, Sebastian the elder, who was holding his boy in his arms to hear the music, gave the child to his mother, and, falling on his knees, with bowed head, wept as only the strong man weeps, — terribly, convulsively.

Now indeed the man began to recognize his own value in the sight of God and man. He had waked up all over! No more dreams, no more idling. The devils had departed — he had found his soul!

Banker Stanley listened to the whole history with unabated interest.

"It will be joyful news to that cousin of his," he said. "By the way, I'll keep an eye on young Sebastian."

"Yes; it will be good news indeed, poor soul! I expect a visit from her soon," Molly said. "I have written her all about it."

"What will she do, I wonder?" the banker mused. "I should like to see that woman."

"She will go straight back to England."

"And can't we dispose of this little French Reine, in some way?" he asked, laughing. "Really, there ought to be some kind of poetic justice meted out to this other woman whose life has been spoiled."

"If you could see little Reine, father, you would not say that, even in jest. Her love and her simple faith in him have been the salvation of her husband. So patient and pretty and in-

telligent, she deserves the happiness she enjoys."

"But now he has come to his senses, this man who was well-born and of consequence in his own country, won't he regret that he has married beneath him?"

"Beneath him!" ejaculated Molly, with a stormy gesture; "she, in her woman's kingdom of love and trust, was immeasurably above him when he married her, and she has never fallen from that height of grace. I believe that now Sebastian loves her, even adores her, for the care, patience, and sweetness with which she has borne his luckless habits. As for his cousin, she disclaims all intention to marry, and will join a sisterhood, which, she says, will alone reconcile her to life. I am quite sure that even were poor little Reine to die she would never marry him."

"Then, it's all right, little woman," said the banker; "but how about yourself?"

"About myself! why, papa! what can you mean?"

"I mean that the idea of having an old maid on the scutcheon of the Stanleys is utterly odious to me." He shook his head, thrust out his feet, and lay back in his chair, glaring at her.

"Father!" and a rich bloom dyed all her face.

"I repeat it; it is odious! Possibly Russell Stacey will soon return. I wish you could make up your mind to encourage the poor fellow."

"Russell!" she grew pale again — "no, no, don't speak of him to me. You know how I feel, papa. I could never marry *him*!"

"You are emphatic on the pronoun," he said slyly.

"Not at all — at least, I didn't mean to be," said Molly confusedly.

"Find a handsomer, more gifted, or richer fellow, if you can."

"Yes, I know," Molly said hurriedly, rising to go; "but I'm not thinking of marriage. Mr. Stacey would have to change the whole course of his life — but that wouldn't matter — I — I have no wish to marry."

"Well, how about your — your printer?"

"*My* printer! Papa, you are *too* bad!" and now her face was suffused, and she could not hide it. His quick eye detected the truth.

"Well, whosever printer he is — mine, then, we'll say," continued the impassive old man. "Right out of the Salvation Army — smart, clever, almost as handsome as Stacey — I don't mind saying that I'd like to help that fellow. I've taken a tremendous fancy to him. Come now, puss, what do you say?"

"I say that you're a horrid tease, and that I hate the very sound of marriage. My mission is marked out for me, and I am determined to live my life in my own fashion."

"So there now!" said the banker, still laugh-

ing, as if he enjoyed her confusion. "All right ; but if you should happen to change your mind — why — it wouldn't be needful to change your mission, would it ?"

The winter passed, and the tenants of Paradise Flats still held their own. Sebastian had never touched a drop of liquor since the day his baby was lost. The child grew more and more angelical, and more and more beautiful, if that could be possible. Sebastian was getting up plans for a modest little cottage with a studio, to be built just outside the city. He had been very successful, and had taken part of a studio with a young and aspiring artist down town. His work, at once strong and graceful, was beginning to be popular. Reine, under changed circumstances and plenty of sun and air, had improved in every way. There was no shadow to dim the light of her pretty face now. She seemed fully alive to the exigencies of the hour, and consulted Molly on matters of the toilet and of culture. Molly gave her lessons, pointing out every inelegance of language and of posture, and Reine was an apt pupil. Her pretty gowns, made now of more expensive material than of yore, set off a figure that no *artiste* could improve ; and every hour spent with her outside of her many out-door duties was a pleasure to Molly. Nan shared her leisure and labors as usual.

The professor had written to Molly in extravagant terms of his pupil.

"She needs the *Conservatoire*, then Berlin," he wrote. "I am going to give the world a prodigy. I am going to stand her up in the Academy to play before thousands — and she will do it — I have no fear, but only do not let her lack *the best of nourishment*."

One night, while the professor mused, and saw in imagination his favorite pupil standing crowned by universal acclamation the idol of the hour, he heard the clang of the fire-bells.

The evening was still and hot.

Wondering where the fire could be, he looked out.

In the eastern part of the city, near the river, a red, angry glow lighted the sky. Now and then showers of live sparks shot up into the lurid atmosphere.

"Where is it?" he cried to a passing watchman.

"Paradise Flats," was the indifferent reply.

With a wild ejaculation, the man turned away, deadly pale. The name of his favorite pupil escaped his lips. Dressing rapidly, he went downstairs, and out upon the street. The blaze had spread and deepened. In its lurid dyes the city grew red. The great tenement house belched fire from the lower doors and windows.

It was a grand spectacle; but the knowledge that human life might be sacrificed lent a lurid horror to the scene.

Half distracted, shivering with a nervous chill, the professor hardly knew what he did as he

shouldered his way through the crowd, calling for little Nan.

"Is it the little girl that plays the fiddle, you mane?" asked a respectable-looking woman with a baby on her arm. "Well, she came down wid me. I wor in the seventh story, — and a death-trap it is, — but when we'd got most half-way, on a sudden she screamed that she'd forgot the fiddle. 'My fathers!' I cried, 'ye won't go back for that dumb thing!' But she did, and Cap'n Molly 'n I both entreatin' her. Then Cap'n Molly flew up afther her, an' that was the last I seen of either of 'em. They'll never come out alive, never, an' all for a fiddle!"

"I charged her never to part with it," groaned the professor. "And not only I, but the world, is the loser."

The scene was wild beyond description, and grew every moment more appalling. Engines and men were put to their utmost skill. As fast as the flames were smothered in one place they burst out with furious intensity at some other point.

Only they had not yet reached the roof.

Distracted mothers below were seeking their children; children were crying for their parents; and the roar of the demon-like flames sounded over all.

The professor threw up his hands. His face was stony, his glance despairing. Never in all his life had he been so moved.

"There's a child in there yet!" he cried at last. His voice was like a clarion.

Then all suddenly, as a vivid lightning-flash startles one with mingled fear and admiration, a sound came that made men shiver and women sob.

The clear, long-drawn tones of a violin, as tender and sweet and vibrant as if played in the calmness of a summer morning, or under the spell of a listening, delighted audience.

As if shocked into new strength, the professor sprang into the surging crowd.

"It's little Nan! my pupil!" he cried. "Someone try to save her!"

Then swelled up a cry from far and near, —

"Look! there they stand, and the child playing for dear life!" Yes, as the smoke swayed aside, there the two stood. Long and slowly the bow was drawn. But Nan and Captain Molly were looking upward.

Just then a carriage dashed on the scene. A man sprang out.

"My fortune to whoever dares to rescue them!"

"Mine too!" shouted the professor.

Clash and click above the roaring flames, the cry of half-frantic firemen, came the sound of the cornet, bugle, and fife. A section of the Salvation Army came on at double-quick.

"Help for the perishing!" cried a stentorian voice; and at the head of the column, lo! Russell Stacey!

“Every man here is a hero!” he cried as he rushed forward, and into the heart of the swaying multitude. “If I fail, I can count upon ten more to follow me. Every man is a hero!”

Ladders were fixed in new places under his direction, but it seemed certain death to attempt to reach the roof. But Stacey was an athlete of the highest order, — had been nearly all his life, — had courted danger merely for danger’s sake. Now that the girl he loved was the prize, her life the guerdon, what would he not do? The man absolutely knew no fear, and that was his salvation. He knew nothing save that Molly was on the top of that hell of fire, and he had been sent to her deliverance.

Still sounded the divine tones of King Solomon, now soft, now loud; and the child, whenever she could be seen, still held the bow with the vigor of a veteran, still looked up.

But help was coming. The flames had not yet burst upon the roof, not where they were standing.

Up, clinging to the pipes, to the sills, to half-burnt scaffolding, where the house had lately been repaired, to anything that gave half a footing, now covered with the smoke as with a shroud, now cheered by the panic-stricken, expectant crowd for some step more secure than the last, anon watched in utter silence — at last the top was gained.

The two, the woman and the girl, did not know

the blackened, smoke-grimed man who had, at the peril of his life, come up such a dangerous height to save them. They had not expected help. They were fully prepared to die. Meantime, the firemen had not been idle. With the courage and intrepidity which marks them as heroes, they had by another passage come to the assistance of the man who, single-handed and alone, had gained a secure footing. It was like a plunge into death to go or be carried to the roof of the house below—but it was safely accomplished.

“Hide your face on my shoulder,” said a hoarse voice, “and trust yourself to me.”

Molly obeyed.

“Tie the fiddle to you in some way,” he said to Nan, “and follow.”

Nan was not afraid. She tied the fiddle to her neck, then, with some assistance, swung herself from the roof, and, in the midst of belching fire and strangling smoke, she reached the roof below, where they were in comparative safety.

“Now you will get help enough,” said Stacey with laboring breath, and sank down unconscious.

A salvo of shouts went up. Women embraced each other, strong men were moved to tears and sobs.

Molly and Nan were brought to the ground, burned somewhat, and frightened now at the peril they had encountered with almost superhuman bravery.

CHAPTER XXXI

FINIS AND HAPPINESS

The Army leads.

It seemed almost a miracle that there had not been a holocaust of human beings. Had the fire occurred later, there is no telling how many precious lives might have been sacrificed.

Little Crump had given the alarm in time, and the man never forgot the experience. He dared not launch his anathemas against the Salvation Army, or call it, as he had been in the habit of doing, the "Damnation" Army. He furled the black flag, and surrendered manfully. Mandy might go to all their meetings, and "Fambly" too. Indeed, he intended to go himself. Mandy might be a captain or a lieutenant, or even an ensign. He had seen those brave fellows stand under the burning walls ready to sacrifice their lives if need be. Their faces, lighted up by a sublime resolve, were as the faces of gods.

The banker's carriage still stood some little way from the scene of the fire.

Little Nan was sobbing in Mrs. McKiseth's

arms ; and the banker lifted Molly as if she had been a child, and bore her to the carriage.

" Little Nan too, father," she gasped.

Little Nan still clung to the old Irish woman ; so he bundled them both in, and took the remaining seat himself.

He had given orders that Stacey should be carried direct to his own house.

" You will have to nurse that man," he said brusquely to his daughter.

" Yes, father," was her meek reply.

" Do you know who it was?"

" No, father."

" Well, it was your *protégé*, the printer, hang him — no, I mean, bless him — God bless him ! " and there was a sob in his voice.

Molly was silent ; but oh, the wild, wild love that leaped up then and there, and that, unlike the flames, was never to be put out again.

When she saw him his whiskers were burned off. When she saw him his spectacles were laid aside, and his wig gone forever. When she looked into his eyes, she knew whom she had loved, and knelt down and kissed the hand that he held weakly out.

She saw it all — saw that the exquisite had towered into a manhood that no one could question ; the millionaire had dared to face the problem of poverty ; the egotist had become a helper of his kind,

"I did it all to gain your love," he whispered; "but in doing it I found a higher life."

"And I love you for it, dearly, dearly!" she answered back, her voice choked with tears. "How did you dare to try to save me?"

"Love," he answered; "just love. I meant to save you, or die with you. Are you glad I am Stacey?" he asked.

She hid her face.

"I think I shall always love two men," she made reply — "Russell Stacey and John Hardy."

There were two weddings not long after.

At one of them the wealth, beauty, and fashion of the city assisted.

At the other the members of the Salvation Army had the seats of honor, while Professor Andromo thundered at the organ, as happy in the recovery of his best pupil as if he had been left a fortune of millions.

Ensign Harry and little Nan were Captain Molly's bridesmaids; and present, in their best, were the denizens of Paradise Flats. Every one of the inmates received an invitation, bevelled cards, satin paper, and silk-tied envelopes. They never forgot that wedding. The invitations were sacredly kept under Bible-covers, in quaint old pieces of furniture, inside of old books that were seldom opened.

They were kept for their children and children's children, to show in the years to come what kind

and loving interest had been taken in them by those in the so-called higher walks of life.

Sebastian built his home, and became a popular artist. He was always a grave, silent man, devoted to his wife and child, and with a fixed purpose some time to cross the ocean and meet his kindred as man to man.

Russell Stacey and Molly were happy in each other, and in their reminiscences of the past. In private, it was said that her husband called her "Captain;" but I do not know if that was so. It was certain that Jacko, the cat with the velvety eyes, had always the post of honor in a well-cushioned armchair.

Both Molly and her husband hold, as the brightest souvenir of their homes, their certificate of membership in the Salvation Army. At all times and in all ways they help on the grand cause with their money and influence, always ready and willing to speak or labor in what they consider the most glorious work of the century, — the redemption and upbuilding of mankind.

THE END.

LEE AND SHEPARD'S POPULAR FICTION

MARY A. DENISON'S BOOKS

That Husband of Mine. By MARY A. DENISON. Price, cloth, \$1.00; paper, 50 cents.

"It is as bright and cheery as a sunbeam; full of good humor and a great deal of patience. It teaches how to get a husband, how to manage one, and how an engagement can be broken. After reading the first page, you will feel like joining in the pursuit of 'That Husband of Mine.'"—*Boston Journal*.

That Wife of Mine. By MARY A. DENISON. Price, cloth, \$1.00; paper, 50 cents.

"There is now and then a touch of genuine pathos. Its incidents, its characters, its language, are of the every-day sort; but its very simplicity and naturalness give it a charm to the ordinary reader; and it is undeniably pure and healthful in tone. We must pronounce 'That Wife of Mine' an excellent book of its kind."—*Boston Journal*.

Mr. Peter Crewit. By MARY A. DENISON. Price, cloth, \$1.00; paper, 50 cents.

The character of the hero is a delightful creation, one of the most original and fascinating in Mrs. DENISON'S books. The hero has been likened to DICKENS' people, but there is no imitation, for his odd traits were freshly studied from nature. *The Advertiser of Elmira, N.Y.*, says, "There are passages of pathos, of moralizing, of pointed ridicule and satire that would do credit to the ablest novelist."

Tell your Wife. By MARY A. DENISON. Price, cloth, \$1.00; paper, 50 cents.

"This, though not a sensational story, is bright enough and timely enough to create a sensation. The story is very entertainingly told, and leaves a good impression."—*Winona Republican*.

If she Will, she Will. By MARY A. DENISON. Price, cloth, \$1.00; paper, 50 cents.

The pages hold a well-woven romance, worthy the attention of every lover of fiction of a pure and ennobling type. In construction and development, the plot is ingenious, and the action spirited. Altogether, the book will prove a welcome addition to the literature of the summer.

His Triumph. By MARY A. DENISON. Price, cloth, \$1.00; paper, 50 cents.

"A sprightly story is 'His Triumph,' in spite of the fact that it opens with a wedding, and ends with a renunciation. We read of two runaways, of lovers' letters, of a haunted house, a *debutante*, and all of the romance and reality that pertain to a well-conceived and well-told story. Mrs. DENISON is a skilful story-teller, and 'His Triumph' is also her triumph."—*Philadelphia Keystone*.

Like a Gentleman. By MARY A. DENISON. Price, cloth, \$1.00; paper, 50 cents.

"The story of one who drank 'like a gentleman' is one of Mrs. DENISON'S best stories. The lovers of romance will pronounce it charming, and will be all the more pleased with it because some of the characters are purer, sweeter, and nobler than are often found in real life. The plot is interesting, the incidents are thrilling, and the story is well-told."—*Chicago Inter-Ocean*.

Rothmell. By MARY A. DENISON. Price, cloth, \$1.00; paper, 50 cents.

"The style is clear and bright, abounding in little novel pictures and delicate touches. Rothmell is a brilliant surgeon with a magnetic eye, but with a *penchant* in earlier life for marrying rich women, which, indulged in, gives him considerable after trouble."—*Chicago Inter-Ocean*.

LEE AND SHEPARD, BOSTON, SEND THEIR COMPLETE CATALOGUE FREE.

LEE AND SHEPARD'S POPULAR FICTION

AMANDA M. DOUGLAS' NOVELS

Osborne of Arrochar. By AMANDA M. DOUGLAS. Price, cloth, \$1.50; paper, 50 cents.

"In this novel, the author introduces us to an interesting family of girls, who, in default of the appearance of the rightful heir, occupy an old, aristocratic place at Arrochar. Just as it has reached the lowest point of dilapidation, through lack of business capacity on the part of the family, Osborne appears to claim his inheritance, and the interesting problem presents itself of marrying one of the daughters or turning the family out. The author thus gives herself a fair field to display her skill in the painting of character, the management of incident, and the construction of the dialogue. She has been in a large degree successful. We feel that we are dealing with real persons; and, as to the management of the story, it is sufficient praise to say that the interest is cumulative. The book will add to the author's reputation."—*School Journal, N. Y.*

The Heirs of Bradley House. By AMANDA M. DOUGLAS. Price \$1.50.

"The author has won a most honorable place in the literary world by the character as well as cleverness of her work. Her books are as clean and fresh and invigorating as a morning in May. If she is not deep or profound, she stirs in the heart of her reader the noblest impulses; and whosoever accomplishes this has not written in vain."—*Chicago Saturday Evening Herald.*

Whom Kathie married. By AMANDA M. DOUGLAS. Price \$1.50.

Miss DOUGLAS wrote a series of juvenile stories in which Kathie figured; and in this volume the young lady finds her destiny. The sweetness and purity of her life is reflected in the lives of all about her, and she is admired and beloved by all. The delicacy and grace with which Miss DOUGLAS weaves her story, the nobility of her characters, the absence of everything sensational, all tend to make this book one specially adapted to young girls.

A Woman's Inheritance. By AMANDA M. DOUGLAS. Price \$1.50.

"Miss DOUGLAS is widely known as a writer of excellent stories, all of them having a marked family likeness, but all of them bright, fascinating, and thoroughly entertaining. This romance has to do with the fortunes of a young woman whose father, dying, left her with what was supposed to be a large property, but which, under the management of a rascally trustee, was very near being wrecked, and was only saved by the self-denying devotion of one who was strictly under no obligation to exert himself in its behalf. The interest of the story is well sustained to the very close, and the reader will follow the fortunes of the various characters with an absorbed fascination."—*New Bedford Mercury.*

Sydnie Adriance. By AMANDA M. DOUGLAS. Price \$1.50.

In this book, the heroine, being suddenly reduced to poverty, refuses an offer of marriage, because she thinks it comes from the condescension of pity rather than from the inspiration of love. She determines to earn her living, becomes a governess, then writes a book, which is successful, and inherits a fortune from a distant relative. Then she marries the man— But let us not tell the story. The author has told it in a charming way.

LEE AND SHEPARD, BOSTON, SEND THEIR COMPLETE CATALOGUE FREE.

LEE AND SHEPARD'S POPULAR FICTION

VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND'S BOOKS

A Boston Girl's Ambition. By VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND.
Price \$1.50.

"This is a grand story, grandly told. The little mists which went to make up the shadows of the years in the lives of two young people, the sufferings and privations of Dorrice and Carryl, their struggle upward, and the happiness which smiled upon them at the end of the struggle, will cause the story to linger long in the minds and hearts of its readers."—*Washington Chronicle*.

That Queer Girl. By VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND. Price \$1.50.

The "Queer Girl" is a charming character, and so is Rowan, the real hero. She is "queer" only in being unconventional, brave, and frank,— "an old-fashioned girl." The girls who follow her history, and that of her pleasant companions, are sure of being delightfully entertained; and they may, if they will, take a lesson from brave, unselfish Madeline.

Daryll Gap. By VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND. Price \$1.50.

The celebrity of VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND as an authoress, her brilliant descriptive powers, and pure, vigorous imagination, will insure a hearty welcome for the above-entitled volume, written in the writer's happiest vein.

"A story of the petroleum days, and of a family who struck oil. Her plots are well arranged, and her characters are clearly and strongly drawn."—*Pittsburg Recorder*.

Lenox Dare. By VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND. Price \$1.50.

A story of New England people, and of life associated with Hampton Beach and its vicinity. The plot is natural and well treated, and the sentiments pure. The story is very entertaining, and, to the thoughtful reader, instructive and stimulating.

A Woman's Word, and how she kept it. By VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND. Price \$1.50.

"This is a thoroughly charming story, natural, wholesome, and extremely interesting. The heroine is a delightful creation, and all the *dramatis personæ* are remarkably well drawn. It is pleasant to come across a novel so entirely worthy of praise, and we commend it without reserve to all our readers."—*Charleston News*.

Mostly Marjorie Day. By VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND. Price, cloth, \$1.50; paper, 50 cents.

In this book, there is the endeavor of a noble and lovable girl to escape from the conventionalities which fettered her life, and engage in some serious duty. She became a nurse, and, in the end, had her exceeding great reward. It is a bright, spirited, and sometimes delicately humorous story, with a well managed plot, and life-like characters.

But a Philistine. By VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND. Price \$1.50.

One of the most pleasing works of this author. It is a story of natural thoughts rather than events; and it is the author's unique coupling of passive subject and vigorous style that gives the work its attractive quality. The characters are strong, and several of the scenic descriptions have the true ring of poetic appreciation, while in conversational passages the diction is bright, pleasing, and varied.

LEE AND SHEPARD, BOSTON, SEND THEIR COMPLETE CATALOGUE FREE.

LEE AND SHEPARD'S

POPULAR FICTION

J. T. TROWBRIDGE'S NOVELS

Neighbor Jackwood. By J. T. TROWBRIDGE. New Revised Edition, with Autobiographical Chapter and Portrait. Price, \$1.50.

"It sparkles with wit, it is liquid with humor, it has the unmistakable touch of nature, and it has a procession of characters like a novel of SCOTT; indeed, in many ways it recalls that great master. There is less description and more action in it than is habitual with SCOTT, and the conception of some of its secondary characters, such as the crazy-brained Edward Longman, would not be unworthy of him."—*John Burroughs*.

Neighbor's Wives. By J. T. TROWBRIDGE. Price, \$1.50.

"A new edition of one of the most successful of this favorite author's books. It will be read with fresh interest by many who have welcomed it in earlier editions, and to those who now give it their first reading it will yield delightful entertainment, and unfold lessons that will live long in the memory."—*Gospel Banner*.

Coupon Bonds. By J. T. TROWBRIDGE. Price, cloth, \$1.50; paper, 50 cents.

"'Coupon Bonds' is undoubtedly one of the best short stories ever published in this country. It is a most happy and felicitous stroke. It is brimful of the very best quality of humor,—the humor that grows naturally out of the character and the situation, and it moves along briskly, without any urging or pushing by the author. It is full of incident, full of character, full of novel and ludicrous surprises and situations; and, if it could be composed into a three-act comedy, would be as irresistible in its way as SHERIDAN's 'School for Scandal.'"—*Scribner's Monthly*.

Cudjo's Cave. By J. T. TROWBRIDGE. Price, cloth, \$1.50; paper, 50 cents.

Mr. TROWBRIDGE's readers are accustomed to plenty of lively incidents and exciting adventures, and in this volume the supply is surely abundant. The story opens with the adventures of a Quaker schoolmaster in Tennessee previous to the opening of the late war, and the exciting scenes attendant upon the opening of the great struggle between North and South are portrayed in a graphic manner. Many of the chapters recall the stories of thrilling adventure that were current in war times.

Three Scouts. By J. T. TROWBRIDGE. Price, cloth, \$1.50; paper, 50 cents.

This story is a companion to "Cudjo's Cave" and "The Drummer Boy," in being a narrative of stormy events in the Civil War, when the army of the Cumberland, under Rosecrans, and the Confederate forces, under Bragg, were battling with each other in 1862. Yet it is complete in itself as a story.



UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 038 716 7

